NATION

No parity between Agniveers & regular soldiers, says Centre

≫ Page: 5 ≪

BUSINESS

Jewellery stocks tumble; Sky Gold down 12 %

≫ Page: 7 ≪

SPORTS

Despite WFI ban: Vinesh reaches competition site

≫ Page: 8 ≪

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SALAR
DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

Website: salarnews.in | www.magzter.com | 12 MAY 2026 | TUESDAY | BENGALURU | 24 DHUL QADAH 1447 H | Vol 5 | Issue No 121 | Pages: 8

PRICES ON 11 MAY

CRUDE BRENT:
USD 103.92
PER BARREL (>3% SURGE)

GOLD:
FALLS RS 600 TO
RS 1.55 LAKH/10G

No fuel shortage: Govt on PM's WFH appeal

India has 60 days of crude stock & 45 days of LPG inventories

NEW DELHI, 11 MAY

The Centre on Monday asserted that there is no shortage of petrol, diesel, LPG or crude oil in the country and urged citizens not to panic.

This was even as Prime Minister Narendra Modi, for the second time in 24 hours urged citizens to reduce fuel consumption, increase the use of public transport and electric vehicles, revive work-from-home practices, avoid unnecessary foreign travel and defer gold purchases in order to reduce pressure on fuel demand and foreign exchange reserves amid West Asia war.

He urged schools to prioritise online classes for the time being and also called for reduced consumption of edible oils.

Analysts said Modi's remarks may indicate that further energy-saving directives and economic measures could follow if the crisis persists.

Addressing an inter-ministerial briefing, officials said India currently maintains around 60 days of fuel stocks and nearly 45 days of LPG inventories despite more than 10 weeks of disruption in global energy markets caused by the conflict involving Israel, the United States and Iran. The prolonged closure of the Strait of Hormuz has significantly affected global crude supplies and pushed international oil prices sharply higher.

Panic buying of petrol had caused shortages and long queues at fuel stations across India —*PTI*

Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, Pankaj Jain, said that Modi's remarks should be viewed as an appeal for responsible energy consumption rather than as an indication of any immediate crisis.

Officials noted that India imports nearly 90 per cent of its crude oil and depends heavily on West Asia for oil and LPG supplies.

The Ministry said 10 Indian-flagged vessels have safely crossed the Strait of Hormuz, while 13 others remain in the region under close monitoring.

Amid global crude prices rising by over 50 per cent since the conflict began, state-run oil companies are reportedly facing heavy losses estimated between Rs 1,000 crore and Rs 1,200 crore. Analysts warned that prolonged disruption could eventually force fuel price revisions. The economic impact is also being felt across sectors dependent on fuel and petrochemical supplies, including glass, plastics and tile manufacturing industries, where jobs are increasingly at risk. Concerns are also rising over fertiliser shortages, lower agricultural output and inflationary pressure on food prices.

The rupee has meanwhile touched record lows in recent weeks, increasing import costs and intensifying inflation concerns. —*Salar News*

'COMPROMISED PM': RAHUL ON MODI'S AUSTERITY MEASURES

NEW DELHI, 11 MAY

Calling Prime Minister Narendra Modi a "compromised PM", Congress on Monday launched a sharp attack over his remarks asking citizens to adopt austerity measures in the face of challenges linked to the West Asia conflict.

Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi said the Prime Minister's appeal to reduce consumption of gold, fuel, cooking oil and fertilisers, and to rely more on public transport and work-from-home options, amounted to "evidence of failure" rather than guidance.

In a post on X, Gandhi said the situation reflected 12 years of governance failures, where citizens are now being told what to buy and what not to buy, and where to travel.

He alleged that the government is repeatedly shifting responsibility onto the public to avoid accountability for its decisions and policies.

"These are not words of counsel; they are evidence of failure," Gandhi said, adding that the Prime Minister's statements expose the extent of economic strain facing the country.

He further said that India has been brought to a point where ordinary citizens are being burdened with adjusting daily consumption due to policy mismanagement.

Gandhi concluded by reiterating that the "compromised PM" is no longer capable of effectively running the country, intensifying the Congress party's criticism of the Union government. —*PTI*

>>>*More on Pages 2 & 4*

Govt denies role in blocking Rahul's reels with Vijay

NEW DELHI, 11 MAY

The government has firmly denied involvement in blocking Rahul Gandhi's Instagram posts, clarifying it was due to an internal platform error. MeitY stated the restriction was caused by Instagram's automated moderation system mistakenly flagging the content, which has now been restored. Government sources from the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology stressed claims linking them to the incident were false. Congress leaders, especially Gandhi's aide Srivatsa, alleged that the block was part of a broader effort to limit Gandhi's digital reach. The blocked reel of TN CM Vijay and Rahul Gandhi, which had 12 million views within an hour, and a photo with Vijay, reaching 46 million, had gone viral before restriction. —*PTI*

Two children burnt alive in Bengaluru shed

BENGALURU, 11 MAY

Two small children were burnt alive after a temporary shed caught fire unexpectedly, in Narayanapura under the Kothanur Police Station limits in the City on Monday afternoon. The deceased children have been identified as five-year-old Arjun and three-year-old Asha originally from Raichur district, and had come to Bengaluru with their parents. —*SALAR NEWS*

>>>*MORE ON PAGE 2*

14 nations to take part in India's Big Cat Summit

NEW DELHI, 11 MAY

Fourteen countries have confirmed their participation in the IBCA Summit 2026, scheduled for 1-2 June, according to the Environment Ministry. India has invited 95 big cat range countries from Asia, Africa, and the Americas, aiming to strengthen global conservation efforts. Saudi Arabia is set to join as the 26th member, with communication received from the Kingdom expressing its intention to formally join, which |will bolster international cooperation on wildlife conservation, biodiversity, and sustainable ecosystems.—*ANI*

Iran's FM likely to visit India for BRICS meeting

TEHRAN, 11 MAY

Iran's Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi is expected to visit India to attend the BRICS Foreign Ministers' Meeting in New Delhi from 14-15 May, according to sources. The visit coincides with Iran's deepening engagement within the expanded BRICS framework, which Iran joined in 2024 alongside Egypt, Ethiopia, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE. Earlier reports indicated Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister Kazem Gharibabadi might also attend the summit. Russia's Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov will participate in the event too. —*PTI*

SC restores Cong man as Sringeri MLA

BENGALURU, 11 MAY

Supreme Court on Monday granted interim relief to Congress leader **TD Rajegowda**, allowing him to continue as MLA of Sringeri for now, even after a recount had earlier declared BJP candidate DN Jeevaraj the winner.

A Bench of Justices Sanjay Kumar and K. Vinod Chandran ordered maintenance of status quo ante and said, "We cannot let you hijack democracy like this," while hearing the matter.

The dispute arises from the 2023 Karnataka Assembly elections, where Rajegowda had initially won the Sringeri seat by 201 votes. Jeevaraj challenged the result before the Karnataka High Court, which later ordered a recount of postal ballots, including re-verification of 279 rejected votes.

Following this, on 3 May, 2026, the Returning Officer revised the result, reducing Rajegowda's tally by 255 votes and declaring Jeevaraj the winner.

Rajegowda approached the Supreme Court, arguing that the recount exceeded the High Court's directions by reconsidering 562 valid postal ballots. He also questioned the legality of ordering a recount despite favourable findings on other allegations.

Accepting his plea for interim relief, the Supreme Court directed restoration of the earlier position and said Rajegowda shall continue as MLA pending final adjudication.

Meanwhile, Jeevaraj faces a criminal case alleging tampering with postal ballot papers, filed by a Congress polling agent. He has sought quashing of the case in the High Court, which has stayed proceedings against him and others. —*Salar News*

G RAM G Act to come into force on 1 July: Centre

NEW DELHI, 11 MAY

The Centre on Monday announced that the Viksit Bharat -- Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) Act will come into force from 1 July, replacing the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act.

The new Act will have a fresh framework that promises 125 days of statutory wage employment to rural households, it said.

According to notifications issued by the ministry, the VB G RAM G Act will come into force in all states and UTs 1 July, and the MGNREGA will stand repealed. The ministry statement assured that the transition from MGNREGA to the new framework would be seamless, without disruption to workers. —*PTI*

>>>*More on Page 5*

SC asks Didi to file pleas if win margin is less than SIR deletion

NEW DELHI, 11 MAY

The Supreme Court said on Monday that former West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee and others can file fresh applications regarding their claim that the victory margins in 31 constituencies in the assembly polls were less than the number of votes deleted there during SIR.

Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi took note of the submissions after senior advocate and TMC MP Kalyan Banerjee referred to an earlier observation of Justice Bagchi that the court can look into the grievances if victory margins are less than the number of names deleted during SIR. He claimed that there were 31 such seats.

The Election Commission, represented by senior advocate DS Naidu, opposed Banerjee's submission, saying that the remedy was an election petition.

Naidu said the poll panel can be held accountable for issues regarding SIR only and the consequential appeals against the addition or deletion of votes during the electoral rolls revision.

At the outset, Kalyan Banerjee referred to the earlier observation of Justice Bagchi on victory margins and said, "One of my candidates lost by 862 votes and, interestingly, 5,550 votes were deleted during the SIR from that constituency. "

He claimed there were 31 such seats where victory margins were less than deleted votes.

"Whatever you want to say about results, about deletions, etc., this requires an independent IA (interim application)," Justice Bagchi said. —*PTI*

WB CEO NAMED WB GOVT'S NEW CHIEF SECRETARY

KOLKATA, 11 MAY

West Bengal's Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Manoj Agarwal was appointed the chief secretary of the Suvendu Adhikari-led BJP government in the state, according to an official order issued on Monday.

Agarwal, a 1990-batch IAS officer of the West Bengal cadre, helmed the EC-mandated SIR exercise in the state in the run-up to the assembly polls in which around 91 lakh voters were removed from the electoral rolls.

Incumbent Chief Secretary Dushyant Nariala was named Principal Resident Commissioner in New Delhi, the order stated. Nariwala, a 1993-batch IAS, was named the chief secretary of West Bengal by the poll body, removing Nandini Chakravorty from the position of the state's top bureaucrat.

FORMER WB MINISTER ARRESTED IN JOB SCAM

KOLKATA, 11 MAY

Enforcement Directorate arrested former West Bengal minister and TMC leader Sujit Bose in a money laundering case linked to an alleged municipality recruitment scam.

Bose, 63, was taken into custody under the PMLA after a day of questioning at the ED's Salt Lake office. He reached the agency's office around 10.30am accompanied by his son, Samudra Bose. Bose, a three-time MLA from Bidhannagar, lost Assembly election to BJP's Sharadwat Mukherjee by 37,000 votes. ED raided his premises in 2025. The investigation pertains to alleged irregularities in recruiting labourers, sweepers, clerks, peons, ambulance attendants, pump operators, helpers, sanitary assistants, and drivers across several municipalities, including South Dum Dum.

3 from UP, Bihar held for killing Bengal CM's aide

KOLKATA, 11 MAY

The West Bengal Police arrested on Monday three persons from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar in connection with the killing of Chandranath Rath, an aide of Chief Minister Suvendu Adhikari, after investigators pursued leads from a UPI transaction made at a toll plaza by one of the suspects. Investigators described the development as a "breakthrough."

The three suspects were remanded to 13-day police custody after they were brought to West Bengal and produced before a court in North 24 Paraganas district.

The three suspects were detained on Sunday and arrested this morning by the SIT.

"The investigation indicated that the assailants were from outside West Bengal. Based on technical surveillance members of the SIT were sent to Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. They arrested the three from UP and Bihar. They have been brought to West Bengal on transit remand," the officer said.

It was found that a car, suspected to have been used by the attackers, had crossed the Bally toll plaza before the murder, said the officer, adding that one of the occupants allegedly paid the toll through a UPI transaction.

"That digital payment helped investigators identify a mobile number and establish the identity of one of the suspects," the officer said. — *PTI*

>>>*More on Page 3*

COURTS GET AI CHATBOT

SC launches '1 case, 1 data' system for case info integration

NEW DELHI, 11 MAY

Chief Justice of India Surya Kant on Monday announced the launch of the "One Case One Data" initiative.

It is a major digital project aimed at integrating case-related information from high courts, district courts and taluka courts into a unified national system to improve case management and judicial efficiency.

Announcing the initiative at the outset of the day's proceedings, the CJI said the integrated platform would help create a comprehensive and interconnected database across courts in the country.

The CJI also launched "Su Sahay", an Artificial Intelligence-powered chatbot integrated with the Supreme Court of India website to help litigants and citizens access court-related services and guidelines more easily.

Developed by the National Informatics Centre in collaboration with the Supreme Court Registry, the chatbot is intended to provide simple front-end assistance for users navigating Supreme Court services.

The CJI appreciated the efforts of Registry officials and Bar members involved in implementing the digital initiatives. —*PTI*

>>>*More on Page 4*

NIA joins probe in gelatin sticks found near PM route in B'luru

BENGALURU, 11 MAY

A day after gelatin sticks were recovered from a roadside near the programme venue of Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the outskirts of Bengaluru, a team of National Investigation Agency (NIA) officials has begun examining the incident, a senior police officer said on Monday.

No arrests have been made so far, he added. Police are also scanning CCTV footage along the route to identify those who placed the gelatin sticks and to determine the motive behind the act.

A special investigation team comprising nearly 50 personnel, including four inspectors, has been formed to probe the case. A case has been registered at Kaggalipura police station under the Explosives Act.

According to police, two gelatin sticks were found on Sunday morning during routine security checks near Tataguni under Kaggalipura police limits, along a route linked to the Prime Minister's movement, around three kilometres from the main venue.

The discovery was made shortly before Modi arrived in the area for the 45th Foundation Day celebrations at the Art of Living Foundation centre on Kanakapura Road near Kaggalipura. —*PTI*

>>>*More on Page 2*

DKS questions practicality of PM's call to save fuel

Asks PM how can people planning marriages not buy gold

BENGALURU, 11 MAY

- He said people would continue to buy gold for marriages, whether through savings or borrowing, irrespective of economic conditions.

Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister **DK Shivakumar** on Monday criticised Prime Minister Narendra Modi's appeal to reduce fuel consumption and postpone gold purchases, calling the suggestions impractical.

Questioning how families planning weddings or Hindu sacred thread ceremonies could avoid buying gold, Shivakumar said such purchases were deeply linked to social and cultural traditions. "How can you tell those planning marriages not to buy gold?" he asked.

Dismissing the Prime Minister's latest advice as unrealistic, he said people would continue to buy gold for occasions such as marriages, whether through savings, borrowing or other arrangements, irrespective of economic conditions.

He also questioned rising fuel prices, saying Modi had urged people to reduce petrol consumption without explaining why prices had increased.

He said the Prime Minister should first address the difficulties faced by ordinary citizens.

On Sunday, Modi had urged people to use fuel judiciously, postpone gold purchases and avoid unnecessary foreign travel in order to reduce pressure on the economy amid tensions in West Asia.

Shivakumar said sacrifices should first begin with Union ministers, central government officials, BJP-ruled states and party workers.

He urged them to switch to public transport before asking citizens to reduce petrol and diesel consumption.

"One should practise first, before preaching to others," he said.

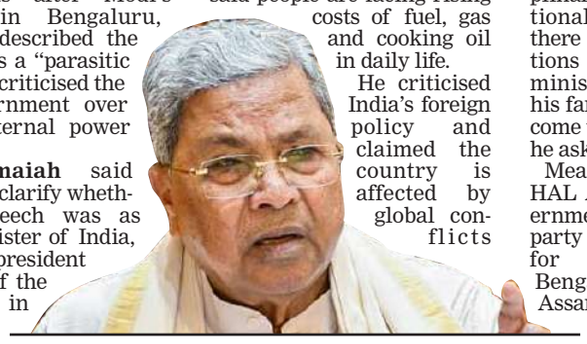
Recalling PM Modi's appeals during the Covid-19 pandemic periode for people to light lamps and clap, Shivakumar questioned whether such an exercises had helped in any meaningful way. *—PTI*

CM accuses Modi of 'destroying dignity' of PMO

BENGALURU, 11 MAY

Siddaramaiah on Monday criticised Narendra Modi for what he described as street-style rhetoric and for "abusing Opposition parties like a petty politician". He said Modi was "destroying the dignity, seriousness and propriety of the Prime Minister's office through speeches filled with lies, poor taste, hatred and jealousy."

This was after Modi's remarks in Bengaluru, where he described the Congress as a "parasitic party" and criticised the state government over alleged internal power struggles



Siddaramaiah said Modi must clarify whether the speech was as Prime Minister of India, State BJP president or Leader of the Opposition in Karnataka, accusing him of confusion over role and responsibility. Siddaramaiah said previous prime ministers including Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira Gandhi and Atal Bihari Vajpayee never used abusive language against the Opposition and maintained decorum.

He also questioned Modi's development claims citing earlier promises of a 5 trillion-dollar economy and said people are facing rising costs of fuel, gas and cooking oil in daily life.

He criticised India's foreign policy and claimed the country is affected by global conflicts involving Israel, United States and Iran arguing that a firmer stand would have helped.

Citing Karnataka's performance, he said the State's per capita income and GDP growth rate are higher than the national average and that its contribution to India's GDP is significant along with strong GST collections.

He alleged deep divisions within BJP and lack of disciplinary action against factionalism. "Within BJP, there are half a dozen factions against former chief minister Yediyurappa and his family. Has none of this come to your notice, Modiji?" he asked.

Meanwhile, BJP said the HAL Airport was not a government function. It was a party programme organised for the victories in Bengal, Puducherry and Assam. *—Salar News*

Two drown while swimming in Mandya lake

MANDYA, 11 MAY

Two young men drowned while swimming in Yaraganahalli Lake in Nagamangala taluk of Mandya district on Monday, police said. The deceased were identified as Prakash Gowda, 24, and Yashas, 23. The two had gone to the lake with friends when the incident occurred. Police said preliminary inquiries suggest they may have ventured into deep water, though the exact cause of the drowning is yet to be established. Their bodies were recovered and handed over to the families after post-mortem examination. Locals have urged authorities to install warning boards and improve safety measures around the lake. *—PTI*

SR Mahesh says no to contesting from Chamundeshwari

MYSURU, 11 MAY

JD(S) working president and former minister SR Mahesh on Monday said he will not contest from the Chamundeshwari Assembly constituency in the next elections and will only fight from KR Nagar. Speaking to reporters, he categorically ruled out contesting from any other constituency and said the party would field a local candidate in Chamundeshwari. This comes amid internal party tensions after Chamundeshwari MLA GT Devegowda distanced himself from the JD(S) and moved closer to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah. Union Minister HD Kumaraswamy, JD(S) State Chief, has indicated the party will not field GTD in the 2028 polls. Mahesh also said none of his family members, including his son, would enter politics, adding he would quit if any of them did during his lifetime. He announced a "Janarondige Janata Dal" event in Varuna on 13 May, to be attended by HD Kumaraswamy and Nikhil Kumaraswamy. *—SALAR NEWS*

GBA polls: DK promises 'big guarantee' on 13 May

BENGALURU, 11 MAY

Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Monday said a "big guarantee" for Bengaluru would be announced on Wednesday.

The move comes in the wake of Karnataka State Election Commissioner GS Sangreshi announcing on Friday that elections for the five city corporations under the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) will be held between 14 and 24 June.

Shivakumar, who also holds the City Development portfolio, met Congress General Secretary Randeep Singh Surjewala and CM Siddaramaiah on Monday to discuss the GBA polls.

Congress MLA and CM's legal advisor AS Ponnanna, who was also present, said conducting GBA polls was a "challenge" for the state government, as the officials responsible for holding the elections are occupied with the ongoing SIR and census.

According to party sources, the Congress leaders discussed preparations for the polls, in case the Supreme Court rejects the GBA or the government's request to postpone the election, citing manpower issues following SIR and census.

They also discussed forming committees and preparing the manifesto. Ponnanna added that they discussed what to do if elections cannot be held.

The previous elected body of the erstwhile BBMP completed its term on 10 September 2020, after which a government-appointed administrator took over the day-to-day affairs. *—PTI*

Family of boy killed in leopard attack gets ₹20L aid

MM HILLS, 11 MAY

A Rs 20 lakh compensation has been announced for the family of a boy killed in a leopard attack at Male Mahadeshwara Hills, officials said on Tuesday.

The victim, **Harshith Gowda** from Bengaluru, had visited the hill shrine with his mother. According to reports, the leopard suddenly pounced on the child while he was holding his mother's hand and dragged him away, killing him within moments. His body was later recovered and taken from Chamarajanagar to Bengaluru on.

The last rites were performed at the Sumanahalli crematorium. The incident has triggered allegations of negligence against forest authorities. The family claimed there were no warning boards about the presence of wild animals along the route and said no safety advisories were issued to devotees visiting the area. *—Salar News*

GOWDA'S DAY OUT

JD(S) Supremo HD Deve Gowda visited the mango and jackfruit fair at Cubbon Park in Bengaluru on Monday *—SALAR*

PM bomb threat accused detained in an hour

BENGALURU, 11 MAY

Bengaluru Police on Monday said a bomb threat made during Prime Minister **Narendra Modi**'s visit to the city was a hoax, adding that the accused was detained within an hour using technical surveillance.

Police said an unidentified man called the control room at 8.29am on Sunday, claiming he had planted a bomb near the Art of Living Foundation on Kanakapura Road, where Modi was scheduled to attend a programme. The caller also threatened to detonate the device.

City Police Commissioner Seemant Kumar Singh said the call was traced to KHB Colony in Koramangala. Although the accused allegedly switched off his phone after making the call, police teams tracked and detained him within an hour.

Personnel from the South East Division, Central Crime Branch and other units are investigating the case. Singh said the accused allegedly had a history of making hoax calls and threatening messages.

Doctors would also examine his mental health condition and previous treatment records, he added.

The threat triggered heightened security checks, including anti-sabotage sweeps and route inspections by bomb disposal squads.

Meanwhile, Union Minister of State Shobha Karandlaje questioned the Karnataka government's handling of security, she alleged that the transfer of over 100 police inspectors and officials ahead of Modi's visit had created confusion within the police force. *—PTI*

Woman dies after tubectomy, kin cries negligence

CHINTAMANI, 11 MAY

Tension prevailed at the Government Mother and Child Hospital in Chintamani after relatives of a 23-year-old woman refused to accept her body, alleging medical negligence following a tubec-tomy surgery.

The deceased, Narmada from Batlahalli village in Chintamani taluk, was admitted on 23 April. The surgery was carried out the next day by Dr Vani Reddy. According to the family, her small intestine was allegedly damaged during the operation.

Surgeon Dr Narayanaswamy later performed a corrective surgery. Narmada was discharged on 7 May, with doctors reportedly assuring her condition was stable.

However, she developed severe lower back pain on Sunday. She was rushed back to the hospital, where doctors declared her dead.

The family said they were misled about her recovery. Her husband, Obalesh, claimed doctors initially cited infection and later revealed intestinal damage. "They assured us she was fine before discharge," he alleged. Hospital Administrative Officer Dr Santosh said the complication was identified and treated promptly through surgery and that she was discharged after recovery. He added the exact cause of death would be known after the post-mortem report. *—Salar News*

Last rites of minister Sudhakar performed with full state honour

CHITRADURGA, 11 MAY

The last rites of Karnataka Planning and Statistics Minister D Sudhakar were performed with full state honours at Chellakere on Monday. The rites were performed as per Jain traditions, with his son lighting the funeral pyre as a large crowd gathered.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar, Assembly Speaker UT Khader, and Home Minister G Parameshwara were among the leaders present.

Sudhakar, a senior Congress leader and MLA from Hiriyur, was 66 years old when he died on Sunday in Bengaluru, after undergoing treatment for a lung infection. He is survived by his wife, son and daughter.

Sudhakar first won from Challakere in 2004 before delimitation pushed him to Hiriyur. Denied a Congress ticket in 2008, he proved his local clout by winning independently. He eventually returned to Congress, successfully winning the Hiriyur seat in 2013 and 2023.

Despite being from the minority Jain community, he was populare in both Hiriyur and Challakere. The state is observing a three-day mourning period. *—PTI*

CM Siddaramaiah, Dy CM DK Shivakumar paid respects to family members during the last rites of Minister D Sudhakar at Challakere on Monday *—PTI*

TWO CHILDREN BURNT ALIVE IN CITY

BENGALURU, 11 MAY

Two small children were burnt alive after a temporary shed caught fire unexpectedly, in Narayanapura under the Kothanur Police Station limits in the City on Monday afternoon.

The deceased children have been identified as five-year-old Arjun and three-year-old Asha originally from Raichur district, and had come to Bengaluru with their parents

According to reports, the children's parents, Durgappa and Savitri, had been living in the temporary shed at Narayanapura for the past six months and were working as daily wage labourers at a company named JCS. As the parents had been instructed not to bring their children to work, the couple had left the children in the care of their grandmother.

The tragedy unfolded around 1 pm when the grandmother

Arjun and Asha *—SALAR NEWS*

stepped out to use the toilet, leaving the children inside the shed. Within minutes, the entire shed was engulfed in flames, trapping the children inside preventing any kind of rescue. One child died on the spot, while the other succumbed to injuries on the way to the hospital. According to preliminary investigations, the fire is suspected to have been caused by an electrical short circuit. Kothanur police have registered a case and further investigation is underway. *—Salar News*

B'luru rail project gets boost with Rs 1,513 cr coach order

BENGALURU, 11 MAY

The Bengaluru Suburban Transport Project received a significant boost as Bi-RIDE announced it had officially issued a work order to the Integral Coach Factory (ICF) in Chennai. The order involves the supply of 153 air-conditioned, broad-gauge, metro-type coaches for corridor-2 and corridor-4, valued at Rs 1,513.75 crore, officials said. The project aims to alleviate traffic congestion in the city and is expected to serve as a reliable and sustainable transport system for Bengaluru and neighbouring areas in the future.

Bi-RIDE stated that under the contract awarded on 6 May, 2026, ICF must commence coach supply within 18 months, enabling the opening of the Chikkabanawara–Yeshwanthpur section of corridor-2 on schedule. The timeline aligns with directives given by Prime Minister Modi during the December 2025 PRAGATI review meeting. An MoU between the organisations will be signed shortly.

The contract covers manufacturing, detailed design, quality inspection, integration, testing, and commissioning. ICF will also obtain statutory approvals from RDSO and coordinate with contractors handling signalling, traction, power supply, and platform screen doors. *—PTI*

'850 PARL SEATS A JOKE'

Tharoor & Tejasvi lock horns over delimitation in US

NEW DELHI/T'PURAM, 11 MAY

- Shashi Tharoor said increasing the strength of Parliament's lower house could turn into a "desi" version of Chinese People's Consultative Conference.

Congress leader Shashi Tharoor and BJP MP Tejasvi Surya locked horns over delimitation and the proposal to expand the strength of the Lok Sabha during a debate at the Stanford India Conference 2026 in California.

Tharoor said increasing the strength of Parliament's lower house to 850 would be a "joke", warning it could turn into a "desi" version of the Chinese People's Consultative Conference, where real debate would be limited. He argued that India must not sacrifice effective discussion for larger numbers, citing the US House of Representatives, which has remained at 435 members since 1929 despite population growth.

Countering him, Surya said delimitation was a "democratic necessity" to improve accountability, calling it "absurd" to freeze Lok Sabha strength at 543. He said the 1971 population base could not represent a 140-crore India in 2026 and stressed the need for closer contact between MPs and citizens.

BJP leader K Annamalai, also present, who described delimitation as a "grand bargain" between northern and southern states, noting that census data would reshape representation. He said states like Tamil Nadu, with low fertility rates, would see different outcomes compared to northern states, but the aim was a balanced outcome where no region felt disadvantaged. Tharoor suggested waiting for Census data expected between 2027 and 2029 before any restructuring, saying it should guide India's political map for the next 50 years. He also supported immediate implementation of one-third women's reservation in Parliament without linking it to delimitation.Surya maintained that delimitation would enhance accountability and ensure a fair democratic structure. *—PTI*

Congress leader Shashi Tharoor and BJP MP Tejasvi Surya took part in a debate at Stanford Conference in California *—PTI*

Uncertainty persists over Kerala CM pick

Ramesh Chennithala to accept 'party decision' as KC, Satheesan emerge frontrunners

VD Satheesan, Ramesh Chennithala and KC Venugopal —*ANI*

T'PURAM, 11 MAY

Uncertainty continues within the Congress over the selection of Kerala's next Chief Minister, even two days after party president Mallikarjun Kharge and Rahul Gandhi held discussions with the three contenders for the post.

Senior Congress leader Ramesh Chennithala, AICC general secretary (Organisation) KC Venugopal and the Leader of the Opposition, VD Satheesan, are the three leaders lobbying for the CM post. The high command met the three leaders on Saturday in New Delhi.

KPCC chief Sunny Joseph and AICC general secretary in charge of Kerala Deepa Dasmunsi also attended the meeting.

Party leaders here indicated on Monday that a decision is expected after Kharge meets Sonia Gandhi.

They also indicated that the high command is waiting for the political atmosphere in Kerala, which witnessed strong demonstrations and poster wars between supporters of Satheesan and Venugopal last week, to calm down before making an announcement.

Congress alliance partners are also said to be unhappy over the delay in deciding the Chief Minister.

Asked about the delay in decision-making, a senior Congress leader, who did not wish to be named, said: "The Assembly expires only on 23 May. So there is no hurry"

- Congress leader PC Vishnunadh pointed out CCTV images from Vadanappally in which a CPI(M) worker was seen installing a board demanding that KC be made the next CM

Ramesh Chennithala said on Monday that whatever decision the high command takes regarding the Chief Ministerial post would be accepted by all Congress and UDF workers.

Meanwhile, Congress leader PC Vishnunadh alleged on Monday that the CPI(M) was trying to "fish in troubled waters."

He was referring to CCTV visuals from Vadanappally in which a CPI(M) worker was allegedly seen installing a flex board demanding that KC Venugopal be made the next CM.

He also raised suspicions about a recent demonstration in Thiruvananthapuram during which a person was seen tearing a flex board the picture of former CM Oommen Chandy.

"No Congressman will damage a board featuring Oommen Chandy," he said. — *PTI*

HC reserves verdict on plea to block TVK MLA's oath

CHENNAI, 11 MAY

The Madras High Court reserved its decision on a petition by DMK's KR Periyakaruppan, seeking to prevent a TVK MLA-elect from taking his oath. The bench, comprising Justices L Victoria Gowri and N Senthilkumar, heard detailed arguments from both sides. Periyakaruppan, a former minister, contested from Tirupattur as a DMK candidate, while R Srinivasa Sethupathi was the TVK candidate, winning by one vote. The petition also requested a recount of votes. The HC had convened a special sitting on Sunday to address the matter and will deliver its ruling soon. —*PTI*

Ex-minister's aide held in JJM scam in Rajasthan

JAIPUR, 11 MAY

Rajasthan's Anti-Corruption Bureau has detained Sanjay Badaya, close aide to ex-minister Mahesh Joshi, in connection with the Rs 960-crore Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) scam. DG ACB Govind Gupta confirmed Badaya's detention at Delhi airport early Monday, as he was returning from Thailand, and said he is being brought to Jaipur. Badaya is suspected to be the scam's mastermind and accused of acting as a middleman. Three suspects remain at large. The Enforcement Directorate had previously arrested Badaya in 2024, but he was granted bail by the Supreme Court. Mahesh Joshi was arrested on 7 May in the case. —*PTI*

BJP goons set afire shops, says TMC's Abhishek

KOLKATA, 11 MAY

TMC leader Abhishek Banerjee accused "BJP-backed miscreants" of setting fire to nearly 10 shops in Khejuri, West Bengal, in front of police. He blamed Union Home Minister Amit Shah for promoting targeted violence. A BJP representative denied the charges, asserting the party promotes peace. Banerjee shared a video of the fire, claiming "nearly 10 shops were allegedly set ablaze last night by BJP miscreants" in Jonka gram panchayat, "right in front of police." A police official confirmed five shops were burnt late Sunday night. Abhishek Banerjee called it "a double-engine disaster" and questioned the deployment of central forces, accusing them of bias. —*PTI*

AIADMK split over TVK, some MLAs want EPS out

CHENNAI, 11 MAY

The recent election drubbing has resulted in an internal rift in the AIADMK, with MLAs divided over extending support to the TVK, while signs of revolt against party chief Edappadi K Palaniswami were also visible.

Having contested 167 out of 234 constituencies, the party was able to secure only 47 seats.

After the poll results, a series of MLA meetings chaired by party general secretary Edappadi K Palaniswami were held.

AIADMK sources said while one section of the party strongly opposed extending support to the TVK in government formation, another faction advocated providing outside support to the Vijay-led party.

Several senior leaders including C Ve Shanmugam and SP Velumani, along with their supporting MLAs, skipped the meetings chaired by Palaniswami.

Party insiders said Shanmugam, Velumani and their supporters have shown interest in backing the TVK.

"There is a clear split within the party. Many MLAs want a change in leadership. If Palaniswami continues as leader, there is a possibility of some MLAs extending support to the TVK," said former AIADMK leader KC Palanisamy. Meanwhile, AIADMK MLA Esakki Subaya dismissed reports of a crisis in the party on Monday, asserting that it remains intact. "No one can break the AIADMK," he said. — *PTI*

My son is innocent, says mother of man held in Rath murder

BALLIA, 11 MAY

The mother of a man arrested in connection with the murder of Chandranath Rath, an aide of West Bengal Chief Minister Suvendu Adhikari, claimed on Monday that her son is innocent and demanded a CBI inquiry into the case.

Jamwanti Singh, a resident of Ballia and an employee at the Rasra post office, claimed her son Raj Singh, who was arrested by West Bengal Police, had been falsely implicated. Jamwanti said she had travelled with her son on 7 May to Lucknow to attend the wedding of the daughter of Legislative Council member Ravishankar Singh.

"On the morning of 9 May we left for Ayodhya and later stopped at a roadside eatery. As soon as we were leaving in our vehicle, the police team intercepted us and took away me and my son," she alleged.

"On 10 May, the police allowed me to meet Raj and informed me that he was being taken to Kolkata by flight," she said. — PTI

Chief Minister Suvendu Adhikari holds meet with Chief Secy Nariala (IAS), Home Secy Sanghamitra (IAS) and DGP Sidh Nath —*PTI*

Land given to BSF for border fencing

KOLKATA, 11 MAY

West Bengal Chief Minister Suvendu Adhikari chaired the first Cabinet meeting on Monday and said his government has granted transfer of land to the BSF for erecting a fence along the Bangladesh border and approved immediate implementation of the Census exercise in the state.

The meeting, attended by the five ministers sworn in so far, also decided to induct Bengal into Central schemes like the Ayushman Bharat health coverage programme.

Adhikari alleged that the Mamata Banerjee-led TMC dispensation had ignored a circular, dated 16 June 2025, that was sent to the West Bengal government from the Office of the Registrar General of India under the Union Ministry of Home Affairs, intimating about the Census exercise in the state. — PTI

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Joseph Vijay visited former chief minister MK Stalin at his residence on Monday —*PTI*

TN Minister misses 1st chance for oath

CHENNAI, 11 MAY

The oath-taking of MLA-elects in the Tamil Nadu Assembly witnessed some interesting moments as a young woman minister initially failed to produce her election certificate, while another legislator mistakenly presented his party colleague's document.

An AIADMK MLA broke down after seeing a portrait of late Chief Minister J Jayalalithaa, officials said.

Hours later, Keerthana took the oath after submitting the certificate, they said.

When Assembly Principal Secretary K Srinivasan invited Keerthana to take oath, she walked to the podium.

While Keerthana neared the podium, Srinivasan asked her for the certificate.

However, she could not produce the certificate. What she replied to Srinivasan is not known and she left the spot.

Later, Keerthana brought the certificate to the House, submitted it to the official and took oath in the name of God.

When Velachery TVK legislator R Kumar was about to begin taking oath after submitting the certificate, Srinivasan stopped him.

It later emerged that Kumar had brought the certificate of his party colleague seated next to him and had given it to Srinivasan. — *PTI*

PUNJAB CM'S COUSIN GIAN SINGH MANN JOINS BJP

CHANDIGARH, 11 MAY

Gian Singh Mann, the cousin of Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann, joined the BJP on Monday, targeting the AAP government over corruption, which he alleged has "doubled" and other issues, including drugs and unemployment.

Lashing out at the Arvind Kejriwal-led outfit, Gian Singh Mann alleged that the AAP has "drifted away" from its policies and also alleged that the leaders from Delhi were calling the shots in Punjab.

Gian Singh Mann, who hails from Satoj village in Sangrur district, is the son of the younger brother of Chief Minister Mann's father. His mother and that of his cousin are sisters.

He joined the BJP at a ceremony attended by Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini and Punjab BJP Chief Sunil Jakhar, who welcomed him into the party at the Punjab BJP headquarters here. Gian Singh Mann had been an active supporter of the AAP and campaigned for the party during the 2022 assembly elections. However, he later became a critic of the Mann government, criticising its land pooling policy.

Speaking to the media after joining the BJP, Gian Singh Mann said he had joined the AAP in 2014 as he was impressed by Kejriwal's policies. He said that Mann had been elected MP from Sangrur twice before becoming chief minister.

However, said that after the AAP formed the government in 2022, it shifted from being the "Aam Aadmi Party" to the "Khas Aadmi Party." — PTI

ECI to roll out SIR phase 3 in 22 states

GUWAHATI, 11 MAY

The Election Commission is set to roll out phase three of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of voters' list in "coming days," officials said on Monday, adding that it could cover the remaining 22 states and UTs covering nearly 40 crore electors.

The ECI had held back its rollout due to assembly elections in Kerala, Assam, Puducherry, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal last month.

So far, SIR has been carried out in 10 states and three UTs. They are Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Kerala, Puducherry, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Lakshadweep, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Goa and Bihar.

A 'special revision' of electoral rolls was carried out in Assam.

Sixty crore of the nearly 99 crore voters have been covered in the clean-up exercises of these voters' list. — PTI

'APPEASEMENT POLITICS STILL EXISTS'

No power can make India bow down, asserts Modi

SOMNATH, 11 MAY

No power in the world can make India bow down, asserted Modi, in his address on Monday at the Somnath Amrut Mahotsav.

He said some "forces" in the country are continuing to prioritise appeasement politics over national self-respect, noting a similar mindset was witnessed during opposition to the construction of the Ram temple in Ayodhya.

He said Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and India's first President Dr Rajendra Prasad had tried to rebuild the Somnath temple, but faced opposition from Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru.

"There are countless examples across the world where foreign invaders destroyed sites linked to a nation's identity. Whenever people got an opportunity, they restored their heritage," Modi said in his address at the Somnath Amrut Mahotsav.

"Yet, in our country, politics was played even over issues linked to national self-respect, and the Somnath Temple stands as a prime example," he added.

Indian Air Force's (IAF) Surya Kiran Aerobatic Team performs manoeuvres during the Somnath Amrut Mahotsav, which marks 75 years of the inauguration of the restored Shiva temple in Gujarat on Monday —*PTI*

Modi conducted 'Maha Pooja' at the Somnath Temple in connection with the Somnath Amrut Mahotsav marking 75 years of the inauguration of the restored shrine dedicated to Lord Shiva.

The prime minister entered the temple and performed 'Maha Pooja' and 'Jalabhishek', the ritual of pouring holy water over the Shivling amid chanting of Vedic mantras.

Modi also witnessed 'Kumbhabhishek', wherein holy water gathered from prominent pilgrimage sites across the country was sprinkled atop the temple's 'shikhar' (towering spire) using a crane.

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi said Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and India's first President Dr Rajendra Prasad had tried to rebuild the Somnath Temple, but faced opposition from the then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru

The Somnath Amrut Mahotsav is being organised to commemorate 75 years since the inauguration of the restored temple by India's first President, Dr Rajendra Prasad, in 1951.

The PM, accompanied by Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel and his deputy Harsh Sanghavi, watched an airshow by the IAF's Suryakiran aerobatic team (SKAT) over the temple.— *PTI*

NDA set for historic third term in Assam

GUWAHATI, 11 MAY

The BJP-led NDA that is set to assume power in Assam on Tuesday will become the only non-Congress dispensation to rule the state for a third consecutive term.

Chief Minister-designate Himanta Biswa Sarma will also etch his name in the political record books by being the first non-Congress CM to take oath for the second straight term.

The state witnessed a significant political shift from being a Congress stronghold to a BJP bastion. The Asom Gana Parishad (AGP), which was the only party to lead two non-Congress governments before the BJP, is now a part of the NDA.

The NDA came to power for the third straight term with a stupendous two-thirds majority, with the BJP alone securing 82 seats. Its allies, AGP and Bodoland People's Front (BPF), bagged 10 seats each in the 126-member Assembly. The Congress, on the other hand, could win just 19 seats. — *PTI*

- The NDA came to power for the third time with a two-thirds majority, with the BJP securing 82 seats. Its allies, AGP and BPF, bagged 10 seats each in the 126-member House

— PTI

Judicial probe ordered into MP dam boat accident

BHOPAL, 11 MAY

The Madhya Pradesh government has formed a one-member judicial commission to investigate the cruise boat accident at Bargi Dam, which claimed 13 lives. The panel will submit its report within three months. The boat, operated by the Madhya Pradesh Tourism Department, capsized on 30 April in Jabalpur district, resulting in the deaths of women and children, with 28 others rescued. Chaired by retired High Court judge Sanjay Dwivedi, the commission will examine causes, rescue measures, and responsibility. It will also review the certification of boats and water activities under relevant laws and develop SOPs for operation and quick response teams. The probe into accident aims to enhance safety standards and accountability.—*PTI*

Delhi govt takes over school after toddler's rape

NEW DELHI, 11 MAY

The Delhi government may take over management of a private school in Janakpuri after a show-cause notice over a toddler's rape remains unanswered. The Directorate of Education (DoE) issued the notice on 8 May, citing serious lapses in child safety, supervision, and statutory compliance. It warned that failure to respond could result in recognition withdrawal and management takeover. The child's mother reported the incident on 1 May, leading to the arrest of a 57-year-old staff member. The DoE's preliminary inquiry found violations, including lack of CCTV and failure in child protection. The school is asked for staff, CCTV, safety policies, and permits by 11 May. Non-compliance may lead to cancellation of recognition and lease.—*PTI*

— ANI

Afghan national with fake passport held at Goa Airport

PANAJI, 11 MAY

Police have detained an Afghan national at Goa International Airport for travelling on fraudulently obtained passports. Diwraj Hiro, from Kandahar and residing in Delhi, was apprehended after discrepancies in his documents were detected. He had recently travelled to Goa from Russia via Bahrain, using a fake Indian passport in the name of "Anil Shukla", a Delhi resident. Officials also found he had previously used another Indian passport impersonating "Suresh Ahuja". Holding both Afghan and Indian passports, he has travelled multiple times since 2009. A case of forgery, cheating, and impersonation has been registered. —*PTI*

Gangster killed in encounter in Gurugram

GURUGRAM, 11 MAY

An alleged shooter from gangster Deepak Nandal's gang was killed, and another injured in a police encounter. Both were arrested in Punjab last Friday in connection with firing at the house of Rahul Fazilpuria's event organiser in Sector 45. The slain individual was Gurusher Singh alias Shera, 23, while Jaspal alias Bablu, 28, was injured and hospitalised. The incident occurred on May 2, when the assailants fired at the house, injuring police officer Kulbir. The police confirmed that both suspects are linked to the gang and involved in the attack on Saurabh Yadav's residence.—*PTI*

Cong, SP, Left close ranks; hit out at Modi's austerity

CPI-M calls for nation-wide stir on 6 Aug

NEW DELHI/MAHOBA, 11 MAY

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Monday said that at a time when people are struggling under the weight of adversity, the prime minister is busy lecturing the country on the virtues of saving

Kharge said that at a time when people are struggling under the weight of adversity, the prime minister is busy lecturing the country on the virtues of saving.

"When the conflict in West Asia erupted on February 28, the Congress party highlighted every critical aspect of the crisis -- the devastation of the economy; the continuous depreciation of the Rupee; soaring prices and shortages of petrol, diesel and LPG; scarcity of fertilisers for farmers; the looming threat to food security; the rising cost of medicines; the crisis facing MSMEs; and much more!" Kharge said on X.

Congress general secretary in-charge (communications) Jairam Ramesh said Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "unexpected pleas" to the people from Hyderabad could mean that tough austerity measures may well be on their way.

Communist Party of India General Secretary D Raja announced a nationwide campaign against the BJP-led Centre, alleging that its policies threaten secularism, federalism, parliamentary democracy and workers' rights. The campaign will begin from 6 August to 15 August 15, culminating in a massive rally in Delhi on 28 September, he said.

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav —*PTI*

> **Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "unexpected pleas" to the people from Hyderabad could mean that tough austerity measures may well be on their way.**
>
> -Congress general secretary in-charge (communications) Jairam Ramesh

In Mahoba Samajwadi Party MP Ajendra Singh Lodhi allegedly made disparaging remarks against Prime Minister Narendra Modi and called him "anti-national" during a party protest here, drawing angry reaction from the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

A purported video of the incident, which surfaced on social media, showed the MP allegedly using objectionable language against the prime minister

About the video, BJP leaders, including Shehzad Poonwalla, said such "vile and indecent remarks" reflect the "distorted mindset and political culture" of the Samajwadi Party. He said people will give it a befitting reply in the 2027 polls. — *PTI*

PM's austerity: BJP flays RaGa for criticising Modi

Ruling party termed Cong power hungry

NEW DELHI, 11 MAY

The BJP on Monday hit back at Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi over his criticism of the prime minister's austerity appeal amid the West Asia conflict, saying the Congress party's politics has remained confined to power and not nation-building.

The ruling party's response came after Gandhi attacked Prime Minister Narendra Modi over his remarks -- about measures suggested to citizens to cope with the West Asia conflict's impact -- saying that the "compromised PM" is no longer capable of running the country.

The Congress leader said the prime minister's words were "evidence of failure".

In a post on X, BJP IT department head Amit Malviya said Modi has not asked people to make sacrifices but urged them to make conscious choices in the national interest, such as conserving energy, promoting indigenous products, preserving foreign exchange and strengthening self-reliance.

"But this is precisely the Congress party's problem. Any call for public participation in the national interest sounds like 'preaching' to them, because their politics has remained confined to power, not nation-building," he said.

BJP IT Cell head Amit Malviya and Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis —*PTI*

> **Modi has not asked people to make sacrifices but urged them to make conscious choices in the national interest, such as conserving energy, promoting indigenous products, preserving foreign exchange and strengthening self-reliance.**
>
> -BJP IT department head, Amit Malviya

Referring to the impact of the West Asia conflict, Malviya said every global crisis affects the entire world and cited India's first prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru to counter Gandhi's attack.

"If appealing to the public to fulfil its responsibility is considered a 'failure', then was your beloved Nehru also a 'compromised PM'?" he asked.

"Nehru himself had said that when wars break out in other countries, their impact is felt in India in the form of inflation. Was that also an 'excuse' then, or was it considered responsible leadership then ?" Malviya said.

If Rahul Gandhi could not understand what Modiji said, then he can't be blamed because somewhere his understanding itself is limited. But the public has understood it, and will respond positively, Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis,said - — *PTI*

SC says no to PIL on Hindu women's right to divorce

NEW DELHI, 11 MAY

The Supreme Court on Monday refused to entertain a plea challenging the constitutional validity of a provision of the Hindu Marriage Act that grants only the wife the right to seek divorce if cohabitation has not resumed for one year or more after a maintenance decree against the husband.

"Don't settle personal vendettas via PILs (public interest litigations)," the bench said.

A bench comprising Chief Justice of India Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi dismissed the plea filed by law student Jitender Singh, who appeared in person and sought a "gender-neutral" interpretation of divorce provisions under the Hindu Marriage Act.

Section 13(2)(iii) of the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955, grants only the wife the right to seek divorce where cohabitation has not resumed for one year or more after a maintenance decree against the husband.

Regulate institutions near border areas

Meanwhile, the Supreme Court asked a petitioner to approach the Centre with his plea seeking directions to regulate all institutions that impart education or religious instructions to children below the age of 14 years.

A bench of Justices Dipankar Datta and Satish Chandra Sharma asked the petitioner, Advocate Ashwini Kumar Upadhyay, to make a representation before the Union of India.

Upadhyay, in his plea, has said unregistered and unrecognised institutions without any effective oversight or regulatory mechanism have been operating along border areas of the country — *PTI*

No parity between Agniveers & regular soldiers, says Centre

MUMBAI, 11 MAY

The Centre informed the Bombay High Court that Agniveers are not "positioned" like regular soldiers and so cannot claim parity in pension benefits for their kin in the event of death in action.

In an affidavit filed last week against a petition by the mother of a deceased Agniveer, the Centre argued that the differentiation is constitutionally valid, as the Agnipath scheme is a short-term engagement.

The government filed its affidavit in response to a petition by Jyotibai Naik, mother

of Agniveer Murali Naik, who was killed in shelling in J&K during Operation Sindoor in May 2025, seeking benefits like those of regular soldiers.

The petition, filed last year through advocates Sandesh More, Hemant Ghadigaonkar and Hitendra Gandh, stated that the Agnipath scheme creates an "arbitrary" distinction between Agniveers and regular soldiers, and questioned the "discriminatory" denial of full death benefits to the family.

However, the government clarified that Agniveers are not like regular soldiers as they are engaged for a four-year period, while pension benefits are linked to long-term service.

The plea will be heard on 18 June. — *PTI*

Consensual relationship not rape: Court

THANE, 11 MAY

A sessions court in Maharashtra's Thane district acquitted a 33-year-old man accused of rape and cheating, holding that a long-term sexual relationship based on a promise of marriage cannot be considered as rape if it was consensual.

Additional sessions judge Ruby U Malvankar cleared the accused, Shahbaz Mohammad Salim Khan, a resident of Mumbra, of all charges of rape and cheating.

A copy of the order dated 2 May was made available on Sunday.

The prosecution alleged that Khan had befriended the complainant, a divorcee with two daughters, while they were working at a mall in Thane. He established sexual relations with her between 2016 and 2018 by issuing a promise of marriage, but later reneged on the promise and threatened her.

While acquitting, the court pointed to lack of evidence in the case. — *PTI*

Pregnant woman killed in UP

SAHARANPUR, 11 MAY

A five-month pregnant woman was allegedly hacked to death with a spade by her intoxicated brother-in-law here, with her family claiming that all the in-laws are involved in the murder conspiracy, police said on Monday.

According to police, the accused allegedly stood near the body with the blood-stained weapon for nearly an hour and threatened to attack anyone who tried to enter the room, before he was overpowered.

The husband and the accused brother-in law have been taken into custody and further investigation is underway, they added.

Official said the incident took place on Sunday night in Nanouta area when the accused Aamir, allegedly attacked his sister-in-law Sana (24) under the influence of alcohol. Circle Officer Ashok Sisodia said the accused hit the woman with a spade and killed her. —*PTI*

MAN KILLS WIFE, SON, DAUGHTER

JAMSHEDPUR, 11 MAY

A man allegedly hacked his wife, pregnant daughter and son to death with an axe in Jharkhand's Jamshedpur on Monday following a family dispute, police said.

The incident took place at Agrico locality within Sidgora police station limits.

Senior Superintendent of Police (East Singhbhum) Piyush Pandey said the accused, Ravindra Prasad Singh, who retired from a steel company in February, had been involved in a prolonged family dispute.

"On Monday, the dispute turned violent and killed the with an axe,"he said. —*PTI*

2 NE women hit, molested outside Delhi hotel

NEW DELHI, 11 MAY

Two Northeast women were allegedly molested, assaulted and subjected to racist remarks by a group of men outside a club in southeast Delhi's Nehru Place area. Police said four people have been identified and raids are underway to arrest them.

The incident took place around 6.30 am on 10 May near a tea stall outside the hotel, police said.

Police said a PCR call regarding women in distress was received at the Kalkaji police station at around 7 am, following which police teams rushed to the spot and found the two women there.

"Preliminary enquiry revealed that the women were allegedly subjected to derogatory remarks and abuses by a group of men, which later escalated into a fight," a police officer said.

The women alleged that they were having tea outside the hotel when two men started catcalling them. Soon, others joined in, leading to an argument that later turned violent.

"One of the complainants alleged that she was molested and that her clothes were torn. The women also alleged that racist remarks were passed against them," the officer said. "Both women were rushed to AIIMS for medical examination," he said. — PTI

MISSION WILDLIFE CONSERVATION

2 cheetahs released into wild in Kuno National Park

SHEOPUR, 11 MAY

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav on Monday released two cheetahs brought from Botswana into an open forest in the Kuno National Park following the completion of their quarantine period.

The reintroduction of cheetahs brought from Nigeria, South Africa, and now Botswana is achieving consistent success, and today Madhya Pradesh has earned nationwide recognition as the 'Cheetah State', the CM said on the occasion.

Yadav released female cheetahs, with identification numbers CCV-2 and CCV-3, at a site on the banks of the Kuno River.

This will give impetus to 'Project Cheetah' and add another important chapter to India's wildlife conservation history, an official said.

The aim of the project is to restore the endangered animal species in the state, increase their numbers, and prepare them for free hunting and roaming.

"The cheetah reintroduction project was launched in Kuno about three and a half years ago by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. It is progressing successfully. MP is setting new records in this project," the CM said. —*PTI*

Woman shot dead in UP hospital

CHANDAULI, 11 MAY

A 55-year-old woman admitted to a private hospital in Chandauli district's Kamlapur was shot dead on Monday morning, police said.

The accused attempted to flee after the incident, but was nabbed by a mob, who severely beat him and handed him over to the police.

The motive behind the murder has not yet been ascertained, police said. Superintendent of Police Akash Patel said the deceased woman has been identified as Laxmina Devi (55), a resident of Bhabua district of Bihar.

He said Laxmina had undergone surgery at the hospital under the Alinagar police station area following a leg fracture. Around 6.30 am, the accused entered the hospital and shot dead Devi. —*PTI*

Groom falls ill at wedding, bride says won't marry

ETAH,11 MAY

A bride in Etah district refused to solemnise marriage, alleging that the groom's medical condition had been concealed from her family, police said on Monday.

Her family refused to proceed with the wedding ceremony on Sunday and demanded his health report, they said.

The incident took place in the Sakit area, where the groom reportedly fell ill during the wedding rituals, triggering a dispute between the two families, police said.

According to local residents, the groom, a native of Katholi village in Kotwali Dehat area, had arrived with the wedding procession at a guest house in Sakit on Sunday evening for his marriage with a woman,

the daughter of Vijay Singh from Nagla Phule village.

The groom allegedly lost his balance during the rituals and fell from his chair, creating panic among those present, they said.

People at the venue rushed to assist him, with some offering water while others suggested calling a doctor.

SHO Videsh Rathi said no written complaint had been received from either side so far. —*PTI*

Rural women working in the field —PTI

How will VB-G RAM G Act replace MGNREGA?

The Centre on Monday announced that the new Viksit Bharat Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin), or VB-G RAM G Act, 2025, will come into force across India from 1 July, replacing the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA).

The government presented the legislation as a "next-generation rural development framework" aligned with the Viksit Bharat 2047 vision, promising an expansion of guaranteed wage employment from 100 days to 125 days a year while linking rural employment more closely with infrastructure creation, climate resilience and village-level planning.

However, opposition parties and labour rights activists have raised concerns over the repeal of MGNREGA, arguing that the existing law had evolved into a rights-based social protection framework and warning that increased digitisation, face-authentication attendance and administrative restructuring could create barriers for vulnerable workers.

What changes under the new law?

Under the new Act, every rural household whose adult members volunteer for unskilled manual work will be entitled to 125 days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year, up from 100 days under MGNREGA.

The Centre said the scheme will focus on four broad categories of works - water security projects; core rural infrastructure; livelihood-related infrastructure; and extreme weather mitigation works.

Under MGNREGA, work was divided into broad categories such as water conservation, drought-proofing, irrigation, renovation of traditional water bodies, land development, and flood control.

The law also introduces the concept of "Viksit Gram Panchayat Plans" (VGPPs), which will serve as convergence-based local development plans prepared by Gram Panchayats and approved by Gram Sabhas.

According to the government, all works under the Act must emerge from these village development plans to ensure "need-based and saturation-focused" rural development.

How will the transition happen?

The Centre has said the transition from MGNREGA to the new law will be "seamless and uninterrupted". MGNREGA will formally stand repealed from July 1, 2026, the same date on which the VB-G RAM G Act comes into effect.

Existing MGNREGA works will continue and will be migrated into the new framework. The government has said incomplete public assets and ongoing projects will be prioritised for completion.

Existing job cards will also remain valid temporarily for workers whose e-KYC has already been completed, until new "Gramin Rozgar Guarantee Cards" are issued.

The government has further clarified that fresh works can also be opened during the transition phase if ongoing works are insufficient to meet labour demand.

What remains unchanged?

Employment must still be provided within 15 days of demand, failing which workers become eligible for unemployment allowance payable by the state governments.

Wages will continue to be paid through direct benefit transfer into bank or post office accounts and must be disbursed weekly or within a fortnight after closure of the muster roll.

The law also retains provisions for compensation in case of delayed wage payments.

What are the new administrative features?

Attendance at worksites will be captured through a face authentication-based system, although the government said exceptions would be allowed in cases of poor connectivity, technical problems or other genuine difficulties.

Another important feature is the restriction on undertaking works during peak agricultural seasons, which states will notify to avoid labour shortages during sowing and harvesting periods.

How will funding work?

The funding patterns for states under the scheme is 90:10 for northeastern and Himalayan states; 60:40 for other states and Union Territories with legislatures, and 100 per cent central funding for Union Territories without legislatures.

The material component expenditure has been capped at 40 per cent at the district level. Under MGNREGS, 100 per cent of the wages were paid by the Centre, while the material cost would be shared 75:25 between the Centre and the states.

Why does the government say the new law is needed?

The government argues that the new framework modernises rural employment by integrating livelihood support, infrastructure creation and climate resilience.

Officials say the law seeks to move beyond a "demand-driven wage programme" towards a convergence-based development model with stronger planning at the village level.

The inclusion of infrastructure linked to extreme weather mitigation is also being projected as a response to increasing climate vulnerabilities in rural India.

The Centre has additionally highlighted the enhanced employment guarantee of 125 days and provisions for uninterrupted work availability during the transition period.

What are the concerns being raised?

Opposition parties and rights activists have questioned the decision to repeal MGNREGA entirely instead of strengthening the existing framework.

The MGNREGS is demand-driven, meaning the government has to allocate additional funds if there is demand for work. The VB-G RAM G Bill provides for normative allocation to states, and any expenditure beyond it has to be borne by the state governments.

Some activists fear that mandatory face-authentication attendance could exclude workers in remote areas with weak digital connectivity or elderly workers facing authentication failures.

Others have raised concerns over the emphasis on convergence and planning, arguing that the scheme's original strength lay in its legal guarantee of immediate wage employment rather than long-term development targets.

There are also apprehensions that restricting work during peak agricultural seasons may reduce earning opportunities for landless labourers.

Critics have further demanded clarity on whether the enhanced 125-day guarantee will be backed by adequate budgetary allocations, noting that delays in wage payments and fund releases had already emerged as recurring issues under MGNREGA. —PTI

SALAR ساہ

TMC stares at existential churn after Bengal rout

- Veteran TMC leader Asit Mazumdar accused sections of the leadership of arrogance and administrative paralysis, alleging that factional rivalries stalled governance and development projects. Senior MP Kalyan Banerjee blamed political consultant I-PAC and spoke of "sabotage"

On a humid Saturday evening, barely hours after Suvendu Adhikari took oath as West Bengal's first BJP Chief Minister at the Brigade Parade Grounds, the mood at several TMC offices across the state was marked by unease.

At a party office in south Bengal, workers sat silently before television screens replaying saffron celebrations. Tea cups remained untouched and conversations repeatedly returned to one question: what remains of the political machine Mamata Banerjee built over the past 28 years - the first 13 years in opposition and the last 15 years in power?

For the TMC, the crisis unfolding now is no longer merely electoral. It is structural, psychological and existential.

The first signs of internal strain surfaced almost immediately after the verdict. Leaders who defended the party leadership until days ago have begun speaking in divergent voices, exposing fault lines long buried beneath uninterrupted electoral dominance.

Veteran TMC leader Asit Mazumdar accused sections of the leadership of arrogance and administrative paralysis, alleging that factional rivalries stalled governance and development projects. Senior MP Kalyan Banerjee blamed political consultant I-PAC and spoke of "sabotage" within the organisation.

The rebellion remains scattered, but Bengal's political history suggests such moments often signal the beginning of deeper churn.

"No political force can remain at its peak forever. Once the rise reaches saturation, decline begins from within. TMC was defeated by TMC itself," the four-term MP said.

He also blamed I-PAC-driven electoral management and ticket distribution strategies, saying, "Every gram panchayat member believed he deserved a ticket. Internal sabotage played a major role in our defeat."

The TMC functioned less like a conventional party and more like a tightly centralised political ecosystem revolving around one axis: Mamata Banerjee. Candidate selection, welfare messaging and organisational control flowed downward through a structure where loyalty often outweighed institutional autonomy.

That model delivered electoral returns for years, helping Banerjee dismantle the 34-year Left Front regime in 2011 and survive successive waves of anti-incumbency. But the same centralisation has now emerged as TMC's biggest vulnerability.

"The party's structure depended heavily on uninterrupted access to power. Once that chain weakens, fragmentation becomes inevitable," political analyst Biswanath Chakraborty observed.

Unlike the BJP or the Left, TMC never evolved into an ideological cadre-based structure with multiple power centres. Nor did it expand meaningfully outside Bengal despite experiments in Goa and Tripura. Over time, the party became inseparable from both Bengal and Banerjee.

At 71, Banerjee remains TMC's tallest mobiliser and only leader with mass emotional resonance cutting across regions and social blocs. But, the terrain confronting her now is different from the years of Singur and Nandigram that fuelled her rise.

Then, she fought an entrenched regime from the streets. Now, she carries the baggage of 15 years in office - recruitment scams, corruption allegations, bureaucratic fatigue, factional rivalries and resentment against sections of the party's local leadership.

The poll verdict appears to have punctured the aura of inevitability that surrounded the TMC since 2011.

Leaders are already scared that municipalities and panchayats may witness defections in the coming months. Ironically, the party that once expanded its control over local bodies by engineering defections from rivals now fears the same template may be turned against it.

The spotlight is also on TMC national general secretary Abhishek Banerjee, who increasingly finds himself at the centre of the storm after the defeat.

Over the past few years, Mamata's nephew transformed into the party's principal organisational strategist and de facto second-in-command. From candidate selection and campaign architecture to booth management, much of the TMC's 2026 blueprint bore his imprint.

But, the scale of the defeat has also turned that centralisation into a political liability. Sections within the party are openly questioning his style of functioning, aggressive organisational restructuring and dependence on consultant-driven political management.

Several leaders believe large-scale replacement and shifting of candidates disrupted local equations and weakened entrenched organisational networks.

Political observers, however, feel writing off Mamata entirely would still be premature. The TMC was reduced to a single Lok Sabha seat in 2004 and won barely 30 seats in the 2006 assembly polls before staging a spectacular resurgence through the Singur-Nandigram movements and sweeping to power in 2011.

Her appeal on Saturday for opposition parties, including the Left, to unite against the BJP underlined both political realism and shrinking room for manoeuvre.

For the TMC, however, the challenge ahead is no longer merely about returning to power, but about preventing Bengal's once-dominant political machine from slipping into organisational drift after the aura of inevitability has cracked. —PTI

LETTERS write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

Hantavirus, Covid, Norovirus: Why are cruise ships prone to outbreaks?

Cruises are sold as floating holidays, but they are also useful for understanding public health. Cruise ships are carefully designed places where many people live, eat, relax and move through the same shared spaces for days at a time.

They show how easily illness can spread when people are packed into a single interconnected environment.

Think of a cruise ship as a temporary city at sea. It has restaurants, theatres, lifts, cabins, kitchens, water systems and indoor gathering spaces. That is great for convenience, but it also means that once an infection gets on board, it can move through the ship in ways that are hard to stop.

The Diamond Princess outbreak is perhaps the best-known example. During the 2020 Covid outbreak, 619 passengers and crew tested positive for the disease. Researchers found that the ship conditions made the novel coronavirus spread more easily.

Their modelling suggested that public health measures, such as isolation and quarantine, prevented many more cases, but it also showed that an earlier response would have further limited the outbreak.

Norovirus (the so-called vomiting bug) is the infection most closely linked to cruise ships. Researchers found 127 reports of norovirus outbreaks on cruise ships, with many linked to contaminated food, contaminated surfaces and person-to-person spread.

A more recent report from the US also showed that norovirus can spread very rapidly from person to person on a cruise ship.

Food service plays a big part in this risk. Buffet-style dining, shared utensils and many people touching the same surfaces can make it easier for stomach bugs to spread. If someone is infected but does not yet feel sick, they may still contaminate food or surfaces before they realise they are unwell.

The ship's design adds to the problem. People spend time together in dining rooms, bars, lifts, corridors, theatres and spa areas. Crew members also live and work in the same environment, often in shared accommodation, so illness can move through the ship from passenger to passenger or between passengers and crew.

Ventilation also plays a crucial role. Cruise ships are not closed boxes, but they do rely heavily on indoor spaces.

Studies into cruise ship air quality have shown that illness can spread more easily in crowded, enclosed spaces, like cabins, restaurants and entertainment venues, if the ventilation system is not up to scratch. Things like adequate fresh air circulation, specialist filters and air-purifying technology all play a role in keeping passengers safe.

Think of a cruise ship as a temporary city at sea. It has restaurants, theatres, lifts, cabins, kitchens, water systems and indoor gathering spaces. That is great for convenience, but it also means that once an infection gets on board, it can move through the ship in ways that are hard to stop —ANI

Legionnaires' disease (a serious lung disease caused by bacteria) shows a different kind of risk. It is not usually spread directly from one person to another. Instead, people can get infected by breathing in tiny droplets from contaminated water systems, hot tubs or showers.

A well-known outbreak among cruise passengers was linked to a whirlpool spa, and recent reports from the US Centres for Disease Control and Prevention have described other cruise-associated legionnaires' disease outbreaks linked to ship water systems.

Age also matters. Cruise holidays are especially popular with older adults, and many passengers have long-term health conditions that make infections more serious.

Cruise ships do have medical facilities, but they are limited compared with land-based hospitals. They are built to give first aid, not to manage a fast-moving outbreak on a large scale.

Other infections, such as respiratory viruses, including influenza, can spread in the same crowded indoor settings, and stomach bugs can spread through food, hands and shared surfaces.

Hantavirus (a severe respiratory illness spread by rodents) outbreaks on ships are rare. However, as recent news of the deaths on the MV Hondius attests, germs in close quarters find it much easier to spread.

How to limit your risk

As an epidemiologist, I have seen many outbreaks in hospitals, schools and even on flights. For travellers, the best protection starts before boarding. It is sensible to check whether the cruise line has clear illness reporting, cleaning and isolation policies. Make sure your routine vaccines are up to date.

And for older adults, pregnant women and anyone with health problems, consult your GP before travelling. Also, ensure your travel insurance covers illness-related disruptions.

Washing your hands with soap and water is the most useful step for preventing stomach bugs. Hand sanitiser can help, but it does not replace soap and water. If you start to feel unwell, the safest move is to avoid buffets and crowded shared spaces and report symptoms early. *The Conversation*

Iran deadlock shadows Don's China trip

Trump rejects Iran's latest proposal calling it 'totally unacceptable'

DUBAI, 11 MAY

Iran and the United States appeared deadlocked once again on Monday over how to end their war, even as a fragile ceasefire showed signs of unravelling.

This is after US President Donald Trump rejected Iran's latest proposal on Sunday, calling it "TOTALLY UNACCEPTABLE!". Iranian state television said Tehran demanded war reparations, recognition of its sovereignty over the Strait of Hormuz, the release of frozen assets abroad and an end to sanctions.

Recent days have seen renewed exchanges of fire, attacks on ships and Gulf states, and fresh clashes between Israel and Hezbollah in Lebanon.

The instability threatens to drag West Asia back into war and deepen the global energy crisis triggered by the war. Iran continues to exert pressure through its control of the Strait of Hormuz — a vital route for global oil and gas exports — while the US blockade of Iranian ports remains in force. Fuel prices have surged and world markets have been shaken by the standoff.

Iran Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei US President Donald Trump and China President Xi Jingping —x

Meanwhile, Trump is expected to raise the crisis during a visit to China from 13 to 15 May, urging Chinese President Xi Jinping to pressure Tehran into concessions. China remains the largest buyer of sanctioned Iranian oil, giving Beijing significant influence.

However, prospects for a breakthrough remain slim. Iran insists the US must first lift sanctions and end its blockade before any negotiations over Tehran's stockpile of highly enriched uranium can begin. The US and Israel argue the uranium must be removed from Iran entirely, warning it could eventually be used to build a nuclear weapon. Tehran continues to insist its nuclear programme is peaceful.

Iran also called for an immediate halt to regional fighting, including the Israel-Hezbollah conflict.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who launched the war alongside Trump on 28 February, said the conflict was "not over". In an interview with CBS's '60 Minutes', he said a key objective remained removing Iran's nuclear material. If negotiations failed, he warned, Israel and the US agreed "we can reengage them militarily."

Netanyahu added that Iran's government's "days are numbered but it could take a lot of days." —*PTI*

BRITAIN DEPLOYS HMS DRAGON TO WEST ASIA

Britain has said it is deploying its warship HMS Dragon to West Asia in preparation for a potential multinational effort to protect shipping in the Strait of Hormuz once conditions allow. Earlier, the warship had been deployed to the Eastern Mediterranean, soon after the outbreak of the Iran war, to support the defence of Cyprus.

Britain's Ministry of Defence spokesperson said the deployment of HMS Dragon forms part of careful planning to ensure the UK is prepared to participate in a multinational coalition aimed at securing the Strait when circumstances permit. —*PTI*

SL RAISES POWER TARIFFS FOR 3RD TIME THIS YEAR

Sri Lanka raised electricity tariffs from Monday, marking the third increase this year amid war. The Public Utilities Commission said consumers using more than 180 units would face an 18 per cent rise. The latest hike follows a 15 per cent increase in January and a 7-8 per cent rise in April. Amid opposition criticism over losses linked to low-quality coal imports, the Commission said coal costs would not be included in tariff revisions. —*PTI*

BARACK HUSSEIN OBAMA: DON SAYS EX-PREZ HELPED IRAN

US President Donald Trump on Sunday escalated his rhetoric against Iran, accusing it of deceiving the United States for "47 years" through a strategy of "delay, delay, delay." In a post on Truth Social, Trump sharply criticised former President Barack Obama, alleging that the Obama administration strengthened Iran economically through sanctions relief and cash payments tied to the 2015 nuclear agreement. Declaring that Iran had once viewed America as "the greatest sucker of them all," Trump warned that Tehran would now be "laughing no longer." —*ANI*

India rejects claims of evacuation pact via Fujairah port

NEW DELHI, 11 MAY

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) on Monday rejected a media report claiming that India and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) are working on an agreement for the evacuation of Indian nationals via Fujairah port, calling the claims of the report "false and baseless."

The clarification came after a media report claimed that India and the UAE were preparing an agreement "that will help in the evacuation of lakhs of Indian workers through the port of Fujairah," and that it could be signed during a stopover linked to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's upcoming foreign visit itinerary.

The report said, "The PM is due to leave for Europe on 15 May with a stopover in Fujairah and then depart for the Netherlands, before visiting Sweden, Norway and Italy." —*ANI*

Pak to celebrate 10 May as day of war with India

ISLAMABAD, 11 MAY

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif declared 10 May as 'Marka-e-Haq Day' to be celebrated yearly. Addressing the first anniversary of 'Marka-e-Haq', the name given to last year's four-day conflict with India, he said Pakistani armed forces gave a "befitting response" to the enemy. The conflict was triggered by the Pahalgam terror attack that killed 26, prompting India's Operation Sindoor on 7 May last year, with airstrikes on nine terror sites. Hostilities ended on 10 May, 2025, after talks, with Pakistan launching retaliatory strikes. Shehbaz praised US President Donald Trump and thanked Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Chinese President Xi Jinping for diplomatic support. —*PTI*

Maldives repays USD 50M treasury bill to India

MALE, 11 MAY

The Maldives has paid off a USD 50 million treasury bill to India, President Mohamed Muizzu announced. The move aims to reduce the nation's debt. India had extended financial support through treasury bills, subscribed to by the SBI. Muizzu explained that the Maldives issued USD 50 million treasury bills in 2019 to bridge budget gaps, which were rolled over annually. His government repaid one bill in January 2024 and settled another on Monday, with a third due in September. Muizzu stated, "We have saved the people from the USD 150 million debt trap the previous administration had set." India's support involved interest-free rollovers that helped ease short-term fiscal pressures. —*PTI*

3 test positive for hantavirus after evacuation

Passengers are disembarked from the hantavirus-stricken cruise ship MV Hondius at the port of Granadilla in Tenerife, Canary Islands, Spain —*PTI*

THE HAGUE, 11 MAY

A French woman and two Americans tested positive or showed symptoms of hantavirus on Monday as nations around the world scrambled to repatriate passengers from a cruise ship hit by an outbreak and to quarantine them.

Passengers from the ship began flying home aboard military and government planes on Sunday after the vessel anchored in the Canary Islands. Personnel in full-body protective gear and breathing masks escorted the travellers from the ship to the shore in Tenerife in an ongoing operation.

The French woman tested positive for hantavirus and her health worsened in the hospital overnight, French Health Minister Stephanie Rist said Monday. The woman was among five French passengers repatriated from Sunday to Paris from the MV Hondius.

One of the 17 American passengers evacuated from the ship and flown to Nebraska also tested positive for the hantavirus but is not showing any symptoms, and another had mild symptoms, US officials said on Sunday.

The Americans would first be taken to the University of Nebraska Medical Centre, which has quarantine facility.

"One passenger will be taken to the Nebraska Biocontainment Unit, while others will go to the National Quarantine Unit for assessment," said Kayla Thomas, a spokesperson for the Nebraska Medicine Hospital.

Meanwhile, WHO asked the home countries of all passengers to provide "active monitoring, which means daily health checks, either at home or at a specialised facility." —*PTI*

Starmer pledges to bring UK closer to EU

LONDON, 11 MAY

Prime Minister Keir Starmer will pledge to bring Britain closer to the European Union as he tries to fight demands to step down after his Labour Party was devastated in local elections.

Starmer plans to use a speech on Monday to argue that he will "face up to the challenges" and restore "hope" to the country.

That includes "putting Britain at the heart of Europe," a decade after the UK voted to leave the EU, his office says.

But Starmer's position is weak, with dozens of lawmakers calling for him to announce a date for departure.

Former Deputy Prime Minister Angela Rayner, a powerful lawmaker often seen as a potential challenger, said "what we are doing isn't working, and it needs to change."

Rayner did not explicitly call for Starmer to quit, but accused him of presiding over "a toxic culture of cronyism" and said the government must "stay true to labour and social democratic values" and ease the cost of living for working people.

"This may be our last chance," Rayner said in a statement on Sunday. —*PTI*

Thailand ex-PM released from jail after 8 months

BANGKOK, 11 MAY

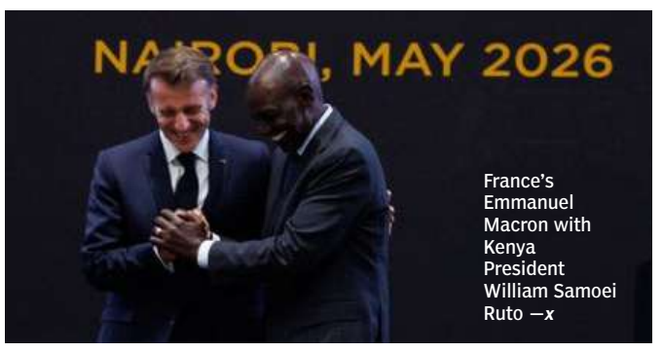
Thailand's former prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra, a divisive political figure, was released from Klong Prem Central Prison after serving eight months of a one-year sentence for corruption charges. Around 300 supporters and allies gathered outside to welcome the 76-year-old billionaire.

Thaksin, a telecommunications magnate, founded his political party in 1998 and served as Prime Minister from 2001 until a 2006 military coup ousted him while abroad. His ouster led to two decades of political polarisation, with Thaksin in exile to escape perceived persecution.

His family, including his daughter Paetongtarn, arrived early to greet him. Thaksin emerged in a white polo shirt, smiling, and was embraced by supporters chanting "we love Thaksin".

He later arrived at his Bangkok residence, responding to reporters that "I was in hibernation, I can't remember anything now". Convicted in absentia, he returned in 2023 to be sentenced.

His sentence was commuted by the King, and he was granted parole last month, subject to four months of probation, including residence restrictions and electronic monitoring. —*PTI*



France's Emmanuel Macron with Kenya President William Samoei Ruto —x

France woos Anglophone Africa at Kenya summit

NAIROBI, 11 MAY

France is pitching what it says is a new model of partnership with African countries at a summit which begins Monday in Kenya as it completes a military withdrawal from West African countries that is widely seen as declining influence.

But Paris is expected to use the two-day Africa Forward Summit, which it is co-hosting, to push a new Africa policy that focuses more on English-speaking countries and offers what it calls a "partnership of equals." Its new defence agreement with Kenya marks the direction it hopes to go.

France has longs maintained economic, political and military tie-ups with its former colonies dubbed Francafrique, which included keeping thousands of troops in the region.

But after years of criticism in those countries over what they described as a heavy-handed approach, France has been forced to withdraw most of its troops.

- Paris is expected to use the two-day Africa Forward Summit to push a new Africa policy that focuses more on English-speaking countries and offers what it calls a "partnership of equals."

The summit — France's first in an English-speaking African country — will be attended by around 30 heads of state and government, including from Francophone countries.

French President Macron said France may disagree with West African governments but "never disagrees with the people." — *PTI*

Pakistan summons Afghan diplomat over KPK attack

ISLAMABAD, 11 MAY

Pakistan on Monday summoned Afghanistan's Charge d'Affaires and issued a "strong demarche" following a deadly suicide attack on a police post in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa's Bannu district that killed at least 15 security personnel.

Pakistan's Foreign Office said investigations, evidence and technical intelligence indicated the attack was masterminded by terrorists operating from Afghanistan. Islamabad warned that it "reserves the right to respond decisively" against those responsible.

The Foreign Office accused the Afghan Taliban of failing to prevent militant groups, including the banned Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), ISKP/Daesh and other outfits, from using Afghan territory to launch attacks against Pakistan. It said the presence of such groups had been documented in UN reports and by international organisations.

Pakistan added that despite several rounds of talks with the Afghan Taliban, mediated by friendly countries, Kabul had failed to take "meaningful and verifiable action" against militants. Relations between the two neighbours have deteriorated amid rising militant attacks and repeated border clashes since the Taliban returned to power in Afghanistan in 2021. —*PTI*

Israeli troops get prison for desecrating Mary

JERUSALEM, 11 MAY

Two Israeli soldiers will spend weeks in military prison for desecration of a Mother Mary statue after one stuck a cigarette in her mouth in southern Lebanon and the other photographed it. The photo went viral and sparked outrage. It was the latest act by Israeli forces in southern Lebanon to be denounced as anti-Christian. Israel's military said the soldier posing would get 21 days in prison and the soldier who photographed it would get 14. The military "views the incident with great severity and respects freedom of religion and worship, as well as holy sites and religious symbols of all religions and communities," spokesperson LLt Col Ariella Mazor wrote on X. —*PTI*

Philippine House votes to impeach Vice President

MANILA, 11 MAY

The Philippine House of Representatives voted overwhelmingly to impeach Vice President Sara Duterte, citing alleged unexplained wealth, misuse of funds, and threats against the president. The vote was 255-26 with nine abstentions. The two impeachment complaints now move to the Senate, which will hold her trial. Duterte, daughter of ex-President Rodrigo Duterte, has denied wrongdoing but has not addressed the criminal allegations in detail. She was previously impeached by the House last year but survived the attempt, with the Supreme Court citing a constitutional technicality. The vote underscores political tensions ahead of future proceedings. —*PTI*

ALL 277 ONBOARD SAFE

Turkish plane catches fire while landing in Kathmandu

KATHMANDU, 11 MAY

A Turkish Airlines aircraft caught fire while landing at Nepal's Tribhuvan International Airport (TIA) on Monday, forcing the suspension of flights for around two hours, airport officials said.

There were 277 passengers and 11 crew members aboard the plane, and all are safe, they said.

The incident occurred at 6.36 am when Turkish Airlines flight TK 726, arriving from Istanbul, caught fire after its rear wheel ignited while touching down.

Following the incident, airport operations were halted and fire engines were rushed to the spot to bring the blaze under control.

- The incident occurred at 6.36 am when Turkish Airlines flight TK 726, arriving from Istanbul, caught fire after its rear wheel ignited while touching down

All passengers and crew were evacuated safely, officials said.

Normal flight operations resumed after 8:30 am.

'The Himalayan Times' newspaper said the aircraft was also carrying some human remains and cargo. It came to a halt on the main runway after the fire.

Authorities said an investigation into the cause of the fire was underway.

Turkish Airlines operates five weekly flights to Nepal from Istanbul.

The Tribhuvan International Airport in Kathmandu connects Nepal to over 40 destinations in 17 countries.

The Himalayan nation is home to some of the world's most dangerous runways, flanked by snow-capped peaks and terrain that poses a challenge even for experienced pilots. — *PTI*

A Turkish Airlines aircraft is seen after passengers were safely evacuated and Nepal's main airport shut down, following a fire on the jet while landing in Kathmandu, on Monday —*PTI*

-PTI

Delhi HC protects Boat co-founder's personality rights

NEW DELHI, 11 MAY

The Delhi High Court has protected the personality rights of entrepreneur and smart wearable firm Boat co-founder Aman Gupta, restraining third parties from the unauthorised use or exploitation of his name, image, voice, and other attributes, including the creation of AI-generated content. In an interim order on 7 May in the Shark Tank judge's lawsuit, Justice Tushar Gedela said that, in a short span of time, Gupta had achieved milestones that had entrenched him in the industry, and that some entities were exploiting his name, voice, persona, slogans, and registered trademarks. The court directed online platforms like Meta and Google to remove content flagged in the lawsuit and disclose details of the alleged offenders. *—PTI*

Dept of Posts aims to double revenue in FY27

NEW DELHI, 11 MAY

The Department of Posts plans to double its incremental revenue to Rs 4,000 crore this year, driven by innovation, accountability, rewards, and target achievement across segments, said Minister of State for Communications Chandra Sekhar Pemmasani. The DoP posted a record Rs 2,100 crore growth in FY26, reaching Rs 15,296 crore from Rs 13,218 crore in FY25. Pemmasani stated, "Our goal is to convert post offices from cost centres to profit centres in 3-4 years." He explained that operational challenges were addressed through monitoring, accountability, and innovation, including 24-hour services and extended hours. The department aims to enhance services and competitiveness by scaling up extended hours at more post offices, so customers can access post services after work. *—PTI*

Online Instruments eyes a750 cr fund ahead of IPO

NEW DELHI, 11 MAY

Online Instruments (India) Ltd filed preliminary papers with Sebi to raise funds via Initial Public Offering (IPO) comprising a fresh issue of Rs 750 crore. The Bengaluru-based company may undertake a pre-IPO placement of up to Rs 150 crore. If so, the size of the fresh issue will be reduced. According to the draft papers filed on Friday, the company will use Rs 160 crore from the fresh issue to repay borrowings, Rs 330 crore for working capital needs, and the remaining for acquisitions and general purposes. Apart from fresh issues, there will be an Offer For Sale (OFS) of up to 57.10 lakh equity shares by promoters Anita Mahesh Bellad and Rajeshwari Shivanand Mahashetti. *—PTI*

CIL's April coal auction quantity drops 6 pc

NEW DELHI, 11 MAY

India's largest coal producer, CIL, offered 30.5 million tonnes (MT) of coal through online auctions in April, marking a 6 per cent decline from 32.5 MT in March. The dip comes amid ongoing geopolitical tensions in West Asia. The state-run coal producer offered coal through the Single Window Mode Agnostic (SWMA) auction. According to CIL provision data, of the total coal on offer by the PSU in April, Mahanadi Coalfields Ltd (MCL) auctioned 9.4 MT, followed by South Eastern Coalfields Ltd (SECL) 5.6 MT, Central Coalfields Ltd (CCL) 4.6 MT, Eastern Coalfields Ltd (ECL) 4.4 MT, Bharat Coking Coal Ltd (BCCL) 3.0 MT, among others. Coal India Ltd accounts for over 80 per cent of domestic coal production.*—PTI*

Jewellery stocks tumble; Sky Gold down 12 %

THIS FOLLOWS PM MODI'S APPEAL TO POSTPONE PURCHASES FOR 1 YEAR

NEW DELHI, 11 MAY

Jewellery stocks faced major selling pressure on Monday, with Sky Gold and Senco Gold tumbling over 10 per cent. This followed Prime Minister Narendra Modi's appeal on Monday to slow discretionary purchases—particularly jewellery and foreign travel — for one year to save foreign exchange amid the West Asia crisis.

Sky Gold And Diamonds Ltd fell sharply by 12.24 per cent, Senco Gold cracked 11 per cent, Kalyan Jewellers tumbled 9.99 per cent, Thangamayil Jewellery tanked 9.79 per cent, Titan Company dived 8 per cent, Tribhovandas Bhimji Zaveri lost 6.83 per cent and PC Jeweller dropped 5.67 per cent on the BSE.

Addressing a rally organised by the Telangana BJP in Hyderabad, Modi suggested reducing petrol and diesel consumption, using metro rail services in cities, carpooling, increased use of electric vehicles (EVs), utilising railway services for parcel movement, and working from home to conserve foreign exchange amid the crisis in West Asia.

This call for austerity has a slightly negative implication for economic growth in FY27, said V K Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Investments Ltd.

"Particularly, the industries related to the austerity call like petroleum, chemical fertilisers, gold, air travel, hotel and related sectors, will be sentimentally impacted," Vijayakumar added.

Jateen Trivedi, VP Research Analyst, Commodity and Currency, LKP Securities, said Modi's remarks on delaying gold purchases should be viewed primarily from the perspective of India's macroeconomic stability and import management.

"The appeal is unlikely to significantly change long-term Indian demand for gold because gold remains deeply linked to savings, investment, and cultural buying patterns.

However, in the short-term, the move may slow discretionary purchases, particularly in across jewellery demand, and create cautious sentiment across bullion and jewellery-related businesses," Trivedi noted. *—PTI*

Why PM pled to buy less gold

Prime Minister Narendra Modi urged Indians to avoid buying gold for a year as it puts pressure on India's economy amid the Iran war. India is the world's second-largest gold buyer, importing $72 billion worth of gold in FY26, paid in US dollars. However, global oil prices have surged above $100 per barrel. Since India imports 88 per cent of its oil , the country requires dollars to pay for crude oil. Gold is considered a "safe" investment during wars. But when Indians buy more gold, importers need more dollars, increasing pressure on the rupee and foreign exchange reserves. Economists say that if gold imports fall by 30-40 per cent, India could save $20-25 billion in outflows— Agencies

'LOWER PURCHASING OF GOLD MAY IMPACT OVER 1 CR JOBS'

NEW DELHI, 11 MAY

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's appeal to cut gold jewellery purchases could hurt employment in the sector, which directly supports more than one crore people and several allied industries, said Rajesh Rokde, Chairman of the All India Gem and Jewellery Domestic Council.

According to Rokde, the jewellery industry contributes around 7 per cent to India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

According to him, Indians hold around 40,000 to 50,000 tonnes of gold, and if even 10 to 20 per cent of this gold is monetised, it could significantly reduce dependence on gold imports. The remarks came as global crude oil prices surged nearly 4 per cent on Monday to around USD 105 per barrel. *—ANI*

THREE DAY STREAK

BSE falls 1,313 pts, NSE by 360 pts as investors unnerved

MUMBAI, 11 MAY

Stock markets fell for the third day running on Monday, with Sensex tumbling 1,313 points and Nifty by 360.30 points after US President Donald Trump dismissed Iran's latest peace proposal, dampening hopes of a diplomatic breakthrough. Further, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's appeal for austerity measures amplified investor concerns over forex reserves, fuel costs, and consumption outlook, analysts said.

The 30-share BSE Sensex tanked 1,312.91 points, or 1.70 per cent, to settle at 76,015.28. Meanwhile, the 50-share NSE Nifty dropped 360.30 points or 1.49 per cent to end at 23,815.85. Over three sessions since Thursday, Nifty dropped over 515 points, or 2 per cent, while Sensex fell by nearly 1,950 points, or 2.5 per cent. While Brent crude traded 2.23 per cent higher at USD 103.5 per barrel.

Jewellery stocks faced heavy selling pressure, with Sky Gold closing over 6 per cent lower. Senco Gold closed 7.8 per cent lower. Similarly, jewellery and fashion company Titan was the biggest loser among Sensex companies, dropping by nearly 7 per cent. InterGlobe Aviation, State Bank of India, Bharti Airtel, Eternal and Reliance Industries were among the major laggards. Meanwhile, Sun Pharma, Hindustan Unilever, Adani Ports, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Axis Bank and ICICI Bank were the winners.

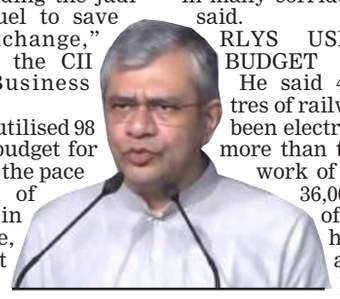
"While global uncertainty surrounding the US-Iran conflict and surging crude oil prices had already weakened sentiment, the Prime Minister's appeal for austerity measures amplified investor concerns around India's forex reserves, fuel costs, and consumption outlook," Hariprasad K, Research Analyst and Founder, Livelong Wealth, said. *—PTI*

Need help to save forex, says Vaishnaw

NEW DELHI, 11 MAY

The government doesn't see the possibility of a truce in West Asia soon, Union minister **Ashwini Vaishnaw** said on Monday, as he appealed to citizens to try their best to help preserve foreign exchange reserves.

"Prime Minister Modi on Sunday called for measures by citizens to overcome the challenges emerging from the west Asia war, including the judicious use of fuel to save foreign exchange," Vaishnaw told the CII Annual Business Summit.



The Railways utilised 98 per cent of its budget for FY26, reflecting the pace of execution of projects, and in days to come, trains will out compete flights in many corridors, Vaishnaw said.

RLYS USE 98% OF BUDGET

He said 49,000 kilometres of railway tracks has been electrified, which is more than the entire network of Germany and 36,000 kilometres of new tracks have been added, which is about six times of Switzerland.

Vaishnaw said the government is working on new corridors, where travel time will come down to just 28 minutes. Pune to Hyderabad will be one hour and 55 minutes and Hyderabad to Bengaluru will be around 2 hours. He said Bengaluru and Chennai will become two cities combined into one, with travel time between them reduced to just 78 minutes. *—PTI*

Rupee crashes 79 paise to 95.28 against US dollar

MUMBAI, 11 MAY

The rupee fell 79 paise to 95.28 on Monday after US President Donald Trump rejected Iran's counter peace offer, sending crude oil prices sharply higher.

A strengthening US dollar and steep Foreign Portfolio Investment (FPI) outflows further pressured the local unit, according to forex traders. The rupee opened at 94.97 before it eventually settled at its record closing low of 95.28, down 79 paise from its previous close.

The dollar index traded at 98.20, up 0.20 per cent. Foreign Institutional Investors offloaded equities worth Rs 4,110.60 crore on Friday. India's forex reserves dropped by USD 7.794 billion to USD 690.693 billion during the week ended 1 May, the RBI said. In the previous week, the reserve declined by USD 4.82 billion to USD 698.487 billion.

Iran sent its response to the latest US ceasefire proposal via Pakistan to permanently end the war, Iran's state-run media said on Sunday. Trump rejected Iran's proposal, even as a key Republican leader urged him to consider the "military option". *—PTI*

Friday's rupee figure erroneous

Clearing Corporation of India (CCIL) reported an inaccurate rupee closing figure of 93.51 on Friday. Meanwhile, other interbank forex platforms showed a closing rate of 94.48. A CCIL official said on Monday that the error was because a deal between two banks collapsed was not incorporated into the closing value. With the corrected Friday figure, the rupee was trading 72 paise lower at 95.20 during mid-day trade on Monday. *—PTI*

UNITED BREWERIES AIMS FOR 6-7% VOLUME GROWTH

NEW DELHI, 11 MAY

United Breweries Limited (UBL) forecasts a 6-7 per cent volume growth in FY27, aiming for double-digit revenue growth driven by premiumisation, network expansion, and stronger consumer demand. Despite inflation and supply disruptions from geopolitical tensions, UBL remains optimistic, citing recent structural initiatives. UBL closed FY26 with only 3 per cent volume growth.

Managing Director **Vivek Gupta** said, "Our forecast is between 6 and 7 per cent volume growth, translating into double-digit revenue growth. We see momentum in the first quarter." He highlighted demand increased 8-9 per cent in FY26, with 4 per cent volume growth and 16 per cent premium segment sales.

Gupta added, "Growth should be high-single-digit supported by demographics, urban consumption, and premiumisation." The company faces rising costs from supply chain disruptions and geopolitical tensions, but CFO Jorn Kersten said UBL is working on mitigating measures, including productivity programmes. Despite supply concerns, Kersten assured no can shortages have affected supply. *—PTI*

Aramco Q1 profit up 25% amid crisis

RIYADH, 11 MAY

Saudi Arabia-based Aramco, the world's largest oil company, said on Sunday that its first-quarter profit jumped 25 per cent even as the Iran war disrupts oil supply and prices. On Sunday, the price of Brent crude rose 2.58 per cent to USD 103.91 per barrel.

Aramco said it has shifted some oil exports to a pipeline to avoid the Strait of Hormuz. The company's East-West Pipeline is now operating at its maximum capacity of 7 million barrels of oil per day, said Aramco President and CEO Amin Nasser. He added that the pipeline is "helping to mitigate the impact of a global energy shock."

- India's GDP to slow to 6.7% amid Iran war, oil price shock: BMI

However, this is only a fraction compared to Armaco's more typical 11.1 million barrels of oil per day in Q4 of 2025. Before the war, 20 per cent of the world's traded oil flowed through the strait, along with supplies of natural gas, fertiliser, and other petroleum products.

Iran effectively seized control of the critical waterway after the US and Israel attacked it on 28 February. A US naval blockade imposed last month further complicates its use. *—PTI*

HSBC predicts two RBI rate hikes in FY27

NEW DELHI, 11 MAY

HSBC predicts that the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) will raise interest rates twice during FY27 due to inflation from rising energy prices and the possible impact of El Nino. Stateting that energy shocks and climate disruptions could push inflation higher and slow economic growth.

HSBC expects the headline inflation to average 5.6 per cent in FY27, influenced by higher energy costs and temperature-driven food inflation.

The report notes, suggesting two rate hikes in late 2026 and early 2027, bringing the repo rate to 5.75 per cent. Concerns over inflation and growth, with India's GDP forecast lowered to 6 per cent from 7.4 per cent. It warns that a severe El Nino could lead to food price increase but notes stocks may help ease inflation.

However, RBI may avoid hikes, controling inflation and growth concerns. *—PTI*

FOR URBAN PROJECTS

ADB committed over $5B to India in 2025

NEW DELHI, 11 MAY

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) strengthened its partnership with India in 2025, committing over USD 5 billion across public and private sectors. According to an official statement released Monday, this includes USD 4.238 billion in sovereign lending and USD 1.06 billion for private operations, targeting sectors such as clean energy, transport, and healthcare.

ADB said nearly one-third of the 16 newly committed sovereign projects focused on human and social development, followed by renewable energy and urban development projects, particularly in lagging states and climate-focused sectors. ADB stated that since beginning operations in India in 1986, it has committed more than USD 63 billion to public sector projects and over USD 10 billion to private sector operations.

Mio Oka, ADB Country Director for India, said ADB remains committed to supporting India's development priorities as the partnership between India and ADB completes 40 years in 2026. Oka added that ADB will begin preparatory work in 2026 for its next country partnership strategy covering 2028-2032, with a focus on multisector and transformational projects supported by private sector collaboration and knowledge solutions.

Notable commitments include USD 846 million for the PM Skilling Scheme for ITI Upgradation, USD 775 million for urban infrastructure. In the private sector, ADB committed USD 1.06 billion, mobilising an additional USD 1.1 billion in co-financing. ADB continued knowledge and policy support, backing the Urban Challenge Fund, which aims to mobilise commercial financing for urban transformation and development projects.—*ANI*

Amaravati to get Singapore style township: Nara Lokesh

AMARAVATI, 11 MAY

Andhra Pradesh Minister **Nara Lokesh** announced that the proposed integrated township in Amaravati, inspired by Singapore's Punggol district, is set to be a model project for urban development.

During his visit to Singapore, Lokesh met representatives of the Joint Implementation Steering Committee (JISC) under Singapore's Ministry of Trade and Industry.

He described the project as a benchmark for the country, with the government aiming to develop Amaravati with Singapore's support.

Lokesh urged the JISC to expedite procedures, seek support from the World Bank, and explore trade opportunities between Andhra Pradesh and Southeast and East Asian nations through Singapore.

Lokesh noted that Andhra Pradesh had already issued notifications inviting Requests for Proposals from interested partners for the development of the Amaravati Economic Region.

He also highlighted plans for Amaravati to become a global MICE destination similar to Suntec City. *—PTI*

-PTI

Shanto, Mominul lift B'desh to 179-run lead over Pak

DHAKA, 11 MAY

Skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto and Mominul Haque hit resolute half-centuries as Bangladesh reached 152-3 on rain-hit Day 4 of the first cricket test against Pakistan on Monday. Bangladesh's lead grew to 179 runs, keeping it on course to push for a result on the final day after bad light forced an early end to play with Shanto unbeaten on 58 and Mushfiqur Rahim on 16.

Shanto, who struck a fluent century in the first innings, put on a 105-run partnership with Mominul for the third wicket to keep Bangladesh on the front foot after the host slumped to 23-2 in the morning session. Mominul followed his 91 with 56 in the second innings, extending his rich form with five half-centuries in a row.

Bangladesh 413 and 152 for 3 (Shanto 58*, Mominul 56, Hasan 1-23) lead Pakistan 386 (Awais 103, Fazal 60, Mehidy 5-102, Taijul 2-46) by 120 runs.—*PTI*

Star Aussie bowling trio to sit out of Pak and B'ladesh tour

SYDNEY, 11 MAY

Australia has rested its premier pace trio of Pat Cummins, Mitchell Starc, and Josh Hazlewood for the upcoming limited-overs tours of Pakistan and Bangladesh, opting to manage their workloads following a gruelling Indian Premier League season.

The decision opens the door for fresh talent even as Cummins, Starc and Hazlewood use the break to prepare for Australia's World Test Championship campaign, which resumes in August with a two-match home Test series against Bangladesh. The trio will miss the three-match series against Pakistan starting 30 May.—*PTI*

Australian tennis legend Anderson passes away

PARIS, 11 MAY

Mal Anderson, the first unseeded player to win the U.S. Open men's singles title, has died aged 91, Tennis Australia said on Monday. Anderson's career started on a dirt court on a farm, and he went on to become an Australian tennis great, winning the U.S. Open crown in 1957 and three major doubles titles. Although unseeded at what was then the United States Championships, Anderson beat three seeds and dropped only two sets on his way to the title. He also won the Davis Cup twice.—*PTI*

-PTI

World Squash C'hips: Chotrani loses to Asal

NEW DELHI, 11 MAY

India's Veer Chotrani went down to Egyptian world No. 1 and defending champion Mostafa Asal in the men's second round of the World Squash Championships in Giza, Egypt.

World No. 45 Chotrani lost 5-11, 2-11, 4-11, which ended the Indian challenge at the Worlds following first-round losses to compatriots Abhay Singh, Ramit Tandon, and Velavan Senthilkumar.

"Veer is one of the players that can catch you off at any moment in time, so I'm really happy to get the win today," Asal told the PSA Tour website. "Veer and I have played a lot together before, and I'm pleased to see him here, playing his best squash," the Egyptian added."We've played a lot in juniors before; we played in the World Juniors as well.—*PTI*

Despite WFI ban: Vinesh reaches competition site

WFI had declared Vinesh ineligible to participate in domestic events

GONDA, 11 MAY

Setting up a fresh showdown with the Wrestling Federation of India, Vinesh Phogat insisted Monday she will compete at the National Open Ranking tournament here and not "take sanyaas", in defiance of a ban by the controlling body of the sport.

She told reporters that she has replied to the WFI's show cause notice and is eligible to return from retirement. The WFI, however, says she cannot compete until disciplinary proceedings against her are complete.

The WFI had declared Vinesh ineligible to participate in domestic events till June 26, 2026, citing the mandatory six-month notice period linked to athletes returning from retirement under anti-doping rules.

"What do you expect me to do? Shall I take sanyaas and stay away? Accept defeat? So that their conspiracy against me succeeds?" Phogat told reporters after meeting the WFI officials.

Immediately after landing at the nearby Ayodhya airport, Vinesh replied to the WFI's show-cause notice, claiming that Rule 5.6.1 of the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) Code concerning retired athletes does not apply to her as she had already informed United World Wrestling (UWW) in June about her decision to resume competition after retirement. As per the world governing body UWW's rules, any athlete seeking to return to competition from retirement must notify UWW at least six months in advance, while remaining available for testing during that period.

Vinesh argued that her formal intimation to UWW about her comeback fulfilled the procedural requirements needed to return to competition.

She said she had informed the WFI on December 12 that she intended to return to the sport. "Why did you have to wait for six months to give me a show cause notice just two days before the competition?" she said.

Still, she gave a short reply initially and will give a full reply within the stipulated 14 days. —*PTI*

Vinesh Phogat arrives at the venue of the National Open Ranking Tournament amid a row over her eligibility-*PTI*

> **I will compete at the National Open Ranking tournament here and not 'take sanyaas.' in defiance of a ban by the controlling body of the sport**
>
> -Vinesh Phogat, Indian wrestler

Playoff pressure as SRH face GT in high-stakes clash

AHMEDABAD, 11 MAY

SRH VS GT @ Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad

7.30 pm IST

As the IPL enters its decisive final phase, second-placed Sunrisers Hyderabad and third-ranked Gujarat Titans prepare for a critical showdown here on Tuesday, which could prove to be pivotal in shaping the playoff race.

The Shubman Gill-led GT appear slightly better placed after recovering from a slow start to the season with a string of crucial wins, including a commanding 77-run victory over Rajasthan Royals, which lifted them to third on the points table. But despite their resurgence and stronger position on the table, they cannot afford complacency as the race for the playoffs remains extremely tight, and a single misstep could prove costly. GT's biggest strength lies in the balance of their side, particularly their batting, which revolves around skipper Gill and Sai Sudharsan, both of whom have provided solidity at the top while negotiating the powerplay smartly.

Andy Flower fined for breaching IPL code of conduct

Royal Challengers Bengaluru head coach Andy Flower has been fined 15 per cent of his applicable match fee for breaching the IPL's code of conduct by getting involved in a dispute with the fourth umpire. —*PTI*

We were not consistent enough: MI head coach Jayawardene

Head coach Mahela Jayawardene admitted that the Mumbai Indians were simply "not good enough" this season after a heartbreaking two-wicket defeat to the Royal Challengers Bengaluru ended their IPL playoff hopes here. The defeat, MI's eighth in 11 matches, also exposed the inconsistency that plagued the five-time champions throughout the campaign. "Yeah, I mean, the season, it's disappointing," Jayawardene said after the match. "We've had our opportunities. We were not good enough. We were not consistent enough with the ball, with the bat, and that showed the margins." MI appeared in control at various stages of the contest but failed to close out the game after handing the final over to rookie all-rounder Raj Angad Bawa, who was bowling for the first time in his four-year IPL career.

Krunal credits DK for RCB batters' improved performance

Veteran all-rounder Krunal Pandya credited mentor and batting coach Dinesh Karthik for Royal Challengers Bengaluru's improved batting approach after his gritty knock against the Mumbai Indians kept the side in the hunt and knocked the five-time champions out of the IPL playoffs race.

Battling severe cramps and batting virtually on one leg, Krunal smashed an unbeaten 73 off 46 balls in a tense chase that RCB sealed off the final delivery.

Krunal said Karthik's behind-the-scenes work with the batters over the last two seasons has played a major role in shaping the side's batting performances. "If you look at last year and even this year, despite the ups and downs, a lot of credit goes to DK," Krunal said at the post-match press conference on Sunday.

India retains top spot in ICC men's ODI rankings after annual update

DUBAI, 11 MAY

India retained the top position in the ICC's men's ODI team rankings after the latest annual update, with reigning world champions Australia claiming the third spot.

In a statement issued on Monday, the ICC said, "India remains at the pinnacle of the ICC Men's ODI Team Rankings after the latest annual update, leading second-placed New Zealand (113 points) by a narrow five-point margin, while Australia (109 points) retains the third place to round off the top three."

India has slipped marginally by a single rating point and now has 118 points to their name.

The annual rankings update applies full weightage (100 percent) to matches played since May 2025, while results from the previous two years are given half weightage (50 percent).

South Africa's tally of 102 points allowed them to edge past Pakistan's 98 points and break into the top four.

Bangladesh is ninth with 84 points, while the West Indies is on 74 points now, and trails the Tigers by 10 points compared to six in the previous update.

Nitin Menon remains only Indian in ICC Elite Panel of Umpires

Nitin Menon remains the only Indian in the ICC Elite Panel of Umpires after the governing body on Monday named an unchanged team of match officials for the 2026-27 international season following its annual review.

Following a comprehensive assessment by its Umpire Selection Panel, the International Cricket Council (ICC) retained the existing group of elite umpires and match referees. Menon has been part of the Elite Panel since 2020. Former India pacer Javagal Srinath remains the only Indian in the Elite Panel of Match Referees.—*PTI*

KSS MEMORIAL SHOOTING

NUPUR TOPS 50M RIFLE PRONE WOMEN'S EVENT

BHOPAL, 11 MAY

Madhya Pradesh's Nupur Kumrawat emerged on top in the 50m rifle prone women ISSF event at the 24th Kumar Surendra Singh Memorial Shooting Championship here on Monday.

Nupur delivered a superb performance to top the women's field with a score of 624.3. Army Marksmanship Unit's Priya finished second with 623.9, while Maharashtra's Bhakti Bhaskar Khamkar secured third place with 622.2.

Tamil Nadu's MA Akschadha Aiswarya clinched the junior women's title with an impressive score of 618.2.

Punjab's Nimrat Kaur Brar secured the silver medal with 617.7, while Madhya Pradesh's Pratha Rathod claimed bronze with 617.6.

Completing a double, Aiswarya also topped the youth women's event with a score of 618.2, underlining her dominance across categories.

Punjab's Nimrat Kaur Brar finished second with 617.7, while Madhya Pradesh's Pratha Rathod secured third place with 617.6. —*PTI*

Holger Rune withdraws from French Open

PARIS, 11 MAY

Former top-five player Holger Rune is withdrawing from the French Open and putting off his return from Achilles tendon surgery until the grass season next month.

"Tough decision not to play the clay season, but the right one. Can't wait to see you all on the grass," Rune said on X on Monday.

Rune was operated on after getting injured at a tournament in Sweden in October.

The 23-year-old Danish player has reached three Grand Slam quarterfinals and was ranked as high as No. 4 in 2023. —*PTI*

WOMEN'S U-17 ASIAN CUP: INDIA LOSE TO CHINA 0-3 IN QF

SUZHOU, 11 MAY

India's creditable run in the AFC Women's U-17 Asian Cup came to an end after a 0-3 defeat against hosts China in the quarter-finals here on Monday.

The defeat dashed the Young Tigresses' hopes of securing a historic qualification for the 2026 FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup, though the campaign still marked the country's best-ever performance in the competition with a first appearance in the knockout stage.

Head coach Pamela Conti made one change from the side that defeated Lebanon in the final group-stage match, with Joya replacing Anushka Kumari in the starting lineup.

Backed by a vocal home crowd, China started aggressively and immediately looked to impose itself through quick passing combinations and movement in the final third.

India, however, defended resolutely in the opening stages, with Abhista Basnett producing an important block in the fourth minute to deny Li Yaqi from close range.

China continued to dominate possession and nearly found the breakthrough in the 15th minute. Liu Yuxi split the Indian defence with a perfectly-weighted pass to Wang Chenxi, who cut inside from the left before curling an effort against the crossbar. —*PTI*

SAI ramps up support for weightlifters ahead of CWG, Asiad

-SAI

NEW DELHI, 11 MAY

The Sports Authority of India (SAI) on Monday said close to Rs 1.95 crore is being spent on international exposure and long-duration national coaching camps for weightlifters who are gearing up for this year's Commonwealth Games and the Asian Games.

The government had sanctioned approximately Rs 70.45 lakh for India's participation in the Asian Senior Weightlifting Championships in Gandhinagar that began on Monday and will run till 17 May. The initial contingent comprises 22 athletes, six coaches, five support staff and three referees for the continental event.

"The Sports Authority of India (SAI) has intensified its support for Indian weightlifting with a combined investment of nearly Rs 1.95 crore towards international competition exposure and long-duration national coaching camps," the SAI said in a statement.

The Asian Championships are being seen as crucial in the build-up to the Commonwealth Games (July-August in Glasgow) and Asian Games (September-October in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan).

The SAI said promising Khelo India athletes are competing in Gandhinagar.

Bedabarat Bharali (79kg), Parv Chaudhary (94kg), Gyaneshwari Yadav (53kg), Sanjana (77kg), Maibam Martina Devi (+86kg), Charu Pesi (65kg), T Madhavan (71kg), Valluri Ajaya Babu (79kg), Abhishek Nipane (88kg), Komal Kohar (48kg) and Koyel Bar (53kg) were among the weightlifters named as Khelo India products by SAI. —*PTI*

KOMAL KOHAR OPENS INDIA'S ACCOUNT WITH BRONZE

GANDHINAGAR, 11 MAY

Komal Kohar opened host India's medal account with a bronze in the women's 48kg weight class at the Asian Weightlifting Championships in Gandhinagar on Monday.

Competing in place of Tokyo silver medallist Mirabai Chanu, the 23-year-old rose to the occasion with a composed performance, finishing with a combined lift of 177kg — 78kg in snatch and 99kg in clean and jerk.

Her effort in the clean and jerk also earned her a bronze medal in the discipline. In a field missing several traditional heavyweights of Asian weightlifting. —*PTI*

THAILAND OPEN

Lakshya, Sindhu shift focus to individual glory

BANGKOK, 11 MAY

Lakshya Sen and PV Sindhu will spearhead India's challenge as the shuttlers shift focus back to individual glory after the country's bronze-medal finish at the Thomas Cup Finals when the USD 500,000 Thailand Open Super 500 tournament begins here on Tuesday.

Seventh seed Lakshya, who suffered an elbow injury and missed the crucial semifinal against France in Denmark, will open against Singapore's Jason Teh Jia Heng. At the same time, Ayush Shetty, who impressed during the Thomas Cup campaign, faces a difficult opener against sixth seed Japan's Kodai Naraoka, a world championships medallist.

In women's singles, sixth seed Sindhu will begin against Chinese Taipei's Tung Ciou-Tong. The 30-year-old from Hyderabad looked sharp during the Uber Cup campaign while sporting an experimental wearable device on her temple, but she will need to close out tight matches better to rediscover her ruthless edge.

With a semifinal finish in Malaysia and a quarterfinal appearance in Indonesia this season, Sindhu has managed to stay just outside the top 10 rankings, but the two-time Olympic medallist will need a consistent run to end her title drought. Former world championships silver medallist Kidambi Srikanth, who reached the finals of the Malaysia Masters and Syed Modi International last season, has shown flashes of brilliance but has often struggled with inconsistency and unforced errors. —*PTI*